

A SHORT
V I E W
OF THE
Immorality and Profaneness
OF THE
English Stage:
Together with
The Sense of Antiquity
Upon this
ARGUMENT.

By JEREMY COLLIER, M. A.

The Fourth Edition.

L O N D O N:

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THE P R E F A C E.

Being convinc'd that nothing has gone farther in Debauching the Age than the Stage-Poets, and Play-House; I thought I could not employ my Time better than in Writing against them. These Men sure, take Virtue and Regularity, for Great Enemies, why else is their Disaffection so very Remarkable? It must be said, they have made their Attack with great Courage, and gain'd no inconsiderable Advantage. But it seems, Lewdness without Atheism, is but half their Business. Conscience might possibly recover, and Revenge be thought on; and therefore like Foot-Pads, they

The Preface.

must not only Rob, but Murther. To do them right, their Measures are Politickly taken: To make sure Work on't, there's nothing like Destroying of Principles; Practice must follow of Course. For to have no Good Principles, is to have no Reason to be Good. Now 'tis not to be expected that People should check their Appetites, and baulk their Satisfactions; they don't know why. If Virtue has no Prospect, 'tis not worth the owning. Who would be troubled with Conscience, if 'tis only a Bugbear, and has nothing in't but Vision and the Spleen?

My Collection from the English Stage, is much short of what They are able to furnish. An Inventory of their Ware-House would have been a large Work: But being afraid of overcharging the Reader I thought a Pattern might do.

In

The Preface.

In Translating the Fathers, I have endeavour'd to keep close to their Meaning: However, in some few places, I have taken the Liberty of throwing in a Word or Two; To clear the Sense, to preserve the Spirit of the Original, and keep the English upon it's Legs.

There's one Thing more to acquaint the Reader with; 'Tis that I have Ventured to change the Terms of Mistress and Lover, for others somewhat more Plain, but much more Proper. I don't look upon this as any failure in Civility. As Good and Evil are different in Themselves, so they ought to be differently Mark'd. To confound them in Speech is the way to confound them in Practice. Ill Qualities ought to have ill Names, to prevent their being Catching. Indeed Things are in a great Measure Govern'd by Words: To Guild over a foul Character, serves

The Preface.

only to perplex the Idea, to encourage
the Bad, and mislead the Unwary.
To treat Honour, and Infamy alike,
is an injury to Virtue; and a sort of
Levelling in Morality. I confess, I
have no Ceremony for Debauchery.
For to Complement Vice, is but one
Remove from worshipping the De-
vil.

March 5th. 1697.

THE

THE
CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

<i>THE Introduction.</i>	Page 1
<i>The Immodesty of the Stage.</i>	p. 3
<i>The Ill Consequences of This Liberty.</i>	p. 5
<i>Immodesty & Breach of good Behaviour.</i>	p. 6
<i>The Stage faulty in this respect to a very Scandalous degree.</i>	p. 8
<i>Modesty the Character of Women.</i>	p. 9
<i>The Natural Serviceableness of this Quality.</i>	
	p. 11
<i>Immodesty much more insufferable under the Christian, than under the Heathen Religion.</i>	p. 14
<i>The Roman, and Greek Theatres more inoffensive than the English.</i>	p. 15
<i>This prov'd from Plautus.</i>	Ibid.
<i>From Terence.</i>	p. 20
<i>From Seneca's Tragedies.</i>	p. 25
<i>The Comparison carried on to the Theatre at Athens.</i>	Ibid.
<i>A short Character of Æschylus.</i>	p. 26
	A 4
	The

The CONTENTS.

<i>The Cleanness of his Expression.</i>	p. 27
<i>The Genius and Conduct of Sophocles.</i>	p. 28
<i>The Sobriety of his Plays.</i>	p. 29
<i>Euripides's Character distinguished from the two former.</i>	p. 30
<i>The Reserv'dness of his Style.</i>	p. 31
<i>All Humours not fit for Representation.</i>	p. 35
<i>A Censure of Aristophanes.</i>	p. 36
<i>Aristophanes his Testimony against himself.</i>	
	p. 48
<i>The Authorities of</i>	
<i>{ Ben. Johnson.</i>	p. 51
<i>Beaumont & Fletcher.</i>	
<i>{ And Corneille</i>	p. 52
<i>against the present Stage.</i>	p. 53

C H A P. II.

The Profaneness of the Stage.

<i>T His Charge prov'd upon them,</i>	
<i>I. By their Cursing and Swearing.</i>	p. 57
<i>The English Stage formerly less hardy in this respect.</i>	Ibid.
<i>The provokingness of this Sin.</i>	p. 58
<i>This Offence punishable by Law, and how far.</i>	
<i>Swearing in the Play-House an Un-Gentle- manly, as well as an Un-Christian pra- ctice.</i>	p. 59

The C O N T E N T S.

A Second Branch of the Profaneness of the Stage, consisting in their Abuse of Religion, and the Holy Scriptures.	p. 60
Instances of this Liberty in the Mock-Astrolger.	Ib.
In the Orphan.	p. 62
In the Old Batchelor, and Double Dealer.	p. 63, 64.
In Don Sebastian.	p. 65
Brief Remarks upon a Passage or two in the Dedications of Aurenge Zebe, and the Translation of Juvenal.	p. 66, 69
Farther Instances of Profaneness in Love Triumphant,	p. 72
In Love for Love.	p. 74
In the Provok'd Wife.	p. 77
And in the Relapse,	p. 78
The Horrid Impiety of this Liberty.	p. 80
The Stage guilty of downright Blasphemy.	
This Charge made good from several of the Plays above-mention'd.	p. 82
The Comparative Regularity of the Heathen Stage, exemplified in Terence, and Plautus.	p. 86
And in the Greek Tragedians.	p. 87
Seneca more exceptionable than the Greeks, but not so faulty as the Modern Stage.	
	p. 94
This outraging of Religion Intolerable.	p. 95

C H A P.

The CONTENTS.

C H A P. III.

T H E Clergy abused by the Stage.	p. 98
<i>This Usage both</i>	<i>{ Unpresidented. p. 112 Unreasonable p. 127}</i>
<i>The Misbehaviour of the Stage upon this account.</i>	p. 138

C H A P. IV.

I Mmorality encouraged by the Stage.	p. 140
<i>The Stage-Poets make Libertines their Top- Characters, and give them Success in their Debauchery.</i>	p. 142
<i>A Character of their fine Gentleman.</i>	p. 143
<i>Their fine Ladies Accomplis'd much after the same manner.</i>	p. 146
<i>The Young People of Figure in Plautus and Terence, have a greater regard to Mor- ality.</i>	Ibid.
<i>The Defence in the Preface to the Mock-Astro- loger, not sufficient.</i>	p. 148
<i>The Christian Religion makes a great diffe- rence in the Case.</i>	p. 149
<i>Horace of a Contrary Opinion to the Mock- Astrologer:</i>	p. 150
<i>The Mock-Astrologer's Instances from Ben. John-</i>	

The CONTENTS.

Johnson Unserviceable.	p. 151
The Authority of Shakespear against the Mock-Astrologer.	p. 154
His Maxim founded on the difference between Tragedy, and Comedy, a Mistake.	p. 155
Delight not the chief end of Comedy.	p. 157
This Assertion prov'd against the Mock- Astrologer from the Testimonies of Rapin.	Ibid.
And Ben. Johnson.	p. 158
Aristotle, and Quintilian, cited to the same purpose.	p. 159, 161
To make Delight the main Business in Co- medy, dangerous, and unreasonable.	p. 162
The improper Conduct of the Stage with respect to Poetry, and Ceremony.	p. 165
Extravagant Rants.	p. 167
Gingles in the Spanish Fryer, King Arthur, and Love Triumphant.	p. 169
Women roughly treated by the Stage.	p. 171
Their Course Usage of the Nobility.	p. 173
These Freedoms peculiar to the English Stage.	p. 175

C H A P.

The CONTENTS.

CHAP. V.

SECT. I.

- R *Emarks upon Amphitryon.* p. 177
The Machines Profane, Smutty, and
out of Character p. 178
The singularity of the Poet in this point. p. 180
Blasphemy in Absalom and Achitophel.
p. 184
A Poem upon the Fall of the Angels, call'd a
Fairy way of Writing. p. 189
The Punishment of the Damned ridiculed.
p. 192

SECT. II.

- R *Emarks on the Comical History of Don*
Quixot. p. 196
The Poet's Horrible Profaneness. p. 197
His want of Modesty, and Regard to the
Audience p. 202
All Imitations of Nature not proper for the
Stage. p. 204
The Poet's Talent in Raillery, and Dedica-
tion. p. 205

SECT. III.

The CONTENTS.

SECT. III.

R emarks on the Relapse.	p. 209
<i>A Mysnomer in the Title of the Play.</i>	p. 210
<i>The Moral Vicious.</i>	p. 211
<i>The Plot ill contriv'd.</i>	p. 212
<i>The Manners or Characters out of Order.</i>	p. 213
<i>The three Dramatick Unities broken.</i>	p. 223

CHAP. VI.

T HE Opinion of the Heathen Philosophers, Orators, and Historians concerning the Stage.	p. 233
<i>The Stage censured by the State. This proved from the Constitutions of Athens, Sparta, and Rome.</i>	p. 240
<i>Farther Instances of this publick Discourtenance in the Theodosian Code.</i>	p. 241
<i>In our own Statute-Book.</i>	p. 242
<i>And in the late Order of the French King.</i>	p. 243
<i>An Order of the Bishop of Arras against Plays.</i>	p. 245
<i>The Stage Condemn'd by the Primitive Church.</i>	p. 250 <i>The</i>

The CONTENTS.

<i>The Councils of Illiberis, Arles, &c. cited.</i>	
	Ibid.
<i>The Testimonies of the Fathers against the Stage, particularly, of Theophilus Antiochenus.</i>	p. 252
<i>Of Tertullian.</i>	p. 253
<i>Of Clemens Alexandrinus.</i>	p. 260
<i>Of Minutius Fœlix.</i>	p. 261
<i>Of St. Cyprian.</i>	Ibid
<i>Laetantius.</i>	p. 265
<i>Sr. Chrysostom.</i>	p. 267
<i>Sr. Hierom.</i>	p. 272
<i>And St. Augustin cited to the same purpose.</i>	p. 273
<i>The Censure of the Fathers, and Councils, &c. applicable to the English Stage,</i>	p. 276
<i>The Conclusion.</i>	p. 280

E R R A T A.

Page 3. line 19. read *Olivis* p. 5. l. 19. r. made up out of.
p. 14. l. 17. r. *Gymnaſium*. p. 28. l. 4. r. *ſis*. p. 33. l. 5,
6. r. *wafing Air*. p. 35. l. 4. r. *clotxæd*. p. 44. l. 14. r. *Con-*
cinnatricis. p. 45. l. 25. r. *under*. Ibid: l. 27. for. *And* r. *and*,
p. 73. after *Texts*, dele *full point*. p. 86. *Margin*, r. *Dinar-*
chus. p. 91. l. 23. r. *Tovas*. p. 92. l. 21. r. *Tractatæ*. p. 117.
l. 11. r. *Futinus*. p. 133. l. 18. r. *Priests*. p. 202. l. 30. r.
Broad. p. 238. l. 6. r. *principue venare*. p. 246. l. 24. for
pas. r. *par*. p. 285. l. 27. r. *with*. p. 286. l. 13. r. *Charter*.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

B. 151.

THE Business of *Plays* is to recommend Virtue, and discountenance Vice; To shew the Uncertainty of Humane Greatness, the sudden Turns of Fate, and the Unhappy Conclusions of Violence, and Injustice: 'Tis to expose the Singularities of Pride and Fancy, to make Folly and False-hood contemptible, and to bring every Thing that is Ill under Infamy, and Neglect. This Design has been odly pursued by the *English-Stage*. Our Poets write with a different View, and are gone into another Interest. 'Tis true, were their Intentions fair, they might be *Serviceable* to this Purpose. They have in a great measure the Springs of Thought and Inclination in their Power. *Show, Musick, Action, and Rhetorick*, are moving Entertainments; and, rightly employ'd, would be very significant. But Force and Motion are Things indifferent, and the Use lies chiefly in the Application. These Advantages are now

The INTRODUCTION.

in the Eeenemie's Hand, and under a very dangerous Management. Like Cannon feiz'd, they are pointed the wrong way ; and by the Strength of the Defence, the Mischief is made the greater. That this Complaint is not unreasonable, I shall endeavour to prove by shewing the Misbehaviour of the Stage, with respect to *Morality, and Religion*. Their *Liberties* in the following Particulars are intolerable, *viz.* Their *Smuttiness of Expression* ; Their *Swearing, Prophaneness, and Lewd Application of Scripture* ; Their *Abuse of the Clergy*; Their *making their top Characters Libertines*, and giving them *Success in their Debauchery*. This Charge, with some other Irregularities, I shall make good against the *Stage*, and shew both the *Novelty and Scandal of the Practice*. And first, I shall begin with the *Rankness and Indecency of their Language*.

See also
Tract 2.
p. 85.
134.
Tract 3.
p. 20. 51.

C H A P.

C H A P. I.

The Immodesty of the Stage.

In treating this Head, I hope the Reader does not expect that I should set down Chapter and Page, and give him the Citations at length. To do this would be a very Unacceptable and Foreign Employment. Indeed the Passages, many of them, are in no Condition to be handled: He that is desirous to see these Flowers, let him do it in their own Soil: 'Tis my Business rather to kill the Root than transplant it. But that the Poets may not complain of Injustice; I shall point to the Infection at a Distance, and refer in General to *Play* and *Person*.

Now among the Curiosities of this kind we may reckon Mrs. Pinchwife, Horner, and Lady Fidget in the *Country Wife*; Widow Blackacre and Oliva in the *Plain-Dealer*. These, though not all the exceptionable Characters are the most Remarkable. I'm sorry the Author should stoop his Wit thus low, and use his Understanding so unkindly. Some People

The Immodesty

appear Coarse and Slovenly out of Poverty: They can't well go to the Charge of Sense. They are Offensive, like Beggars, for want of Necessaries. But this is none of the *Plain-Dealer's Case*; He can afford his Muse a better Dress when he pleases. But then the Rule is, where the Motive is the less, the Fault is the greater. To proceed, *Jacinta*, *Elvira*, *Dalinda*, and *Lady Plyant*, in the *Mock Astrologer*, *Spanisb-Fryar*, *Love-Triumphant*, and *Double-Dealer*, forget themselves Extreamly: And almost all the *Characters* in the *Old Batchelour*, are foul and nauseous. *Love for Love*, and the *Relapse*, strike sometimes upon this *Sand*, and so likewise does *Don Sebastian*.

I don't pretend to have read the *Stage* through; neither am I Particular to my Utmost. Here is quoting enough unless 'twere better: Besides, I may have Occasion to mention somewhat of this kind afterwards. But from what has been hinted already, the Reader may be over-furnished. Here is a large Collection of Debauchery; such *Pieces* are rarely to be met with: 'Tis sometimes painted at length too, and appears in great variety of Progress and Practice. It wears almost all sorts of Dresses to engage the Fancy, and fasten upon the Me-

of the STAGE.

Memory, and keep up the Charm from Languishing. Sometimes you have it in Image and Description ; sometimes by way of Allusion ; sometimes in disguise ; and sometimes without it. And what can be the Meaning of such a Representation, unless it be to Tincture the Audience, to Extinguish Shame, and make Lewdness a Diversion ? This is the Natural Consequence, and therefore one would think 'twas the Intention too. Such Licentious Discourse tends to no Point but to stain the Imagination, to awaken Folly, and to weaken the Defences of Virtue : It was upon the Account of these Disorders that *Plato* banish'd *Poets* his *Commonwealth* : And one of the *Fathers* calls Poetry, *Vinum Demónum*, an intoxicating *Draught*, made up of the Devil's *Dispensatory*.

I grant the Abuse of a Thing is no Argument against the use of it. However, Young People particularly should not entertain themselves with a Lewd Picture ; especially when 'tis drawn by a Masterly Hand. For such a Liberty may probably raise those Passions which can neither be discharged without Trouble, nor satisfied without a Crime : 'Tis not safe for a Man to trust his Virtue too far, for fear it should give

The Immodesty

him the slip. But the Danger of such an Entertainment is but part of the Objection: 'Tis all Scandal and Meanness into the Bargain: It does in effect degrade Humane Nature; sinks Reason into Appetite, and breaks down the Distinctions between Man and Beast. Goats and Monkeys, if they could speak, would express their Brutality in such Language as this.

To argue the Matter more at large.

Smuttiness is a Fault in Behaviour as well as in Religion. 'Tis a very Coarse Diversion, the Entertainment of those who are generally least both in Sense, and Station; The looser part of the *Mob*, have no true relish of Decency and Honour, and want Education, and Thought, to furnish out a gentle Conversation. Barrenness of Fancy makes them often take up with those Scandalous Liberties. A *Vicious* Imagination may blot a great deal of Paper at this rate with ease enough: And 'tis possible Convenience may sometimes invite to the Expedient. The Modern Poets seem to use *Smut* as the Old Ones did *Machines*, to relieve a fainting Invention. When *Pegasus* is jaded, and would stand still, he is apt like other *Tits*, to run into every Puddle.

Ob-

Obscenity in any Company is a ruffick uncreditable Talent ; but among Women 'tis particularly rude. Such Talk would be very affrontive in Conversation, and not endur'd by any Lady of Reputation. Whence then comes it to pass, that those Liberties which disoblige so much in Conversation, should entertain upon the *Stage*? Do the Women leave all the regards to Decency and Conscience behind them, when they come to the *Play-House*? Or does the Place transform their Inclinations, and turn their former Aversions into Pleasure? Or were their Pretences to Sobriety elsewhere nothing but Hypocrisy and Grimace? Such Suppositions as these are all Satyr and Invective : They are rude Imputations upon the whole Sex. To treat the Ladies with such Stuff, is no better than taking their Money to abuse them. It supposes their Imagination vicious, and their Memories ill furnish'd : That they are practised in the Language of the Stews, and pleas'd with the Scenes of Brutishness. When at the same time the Customs of Education, and the Laws of Decency, are so very cautious, and reserv'd in regard to Women : I say so very reserv'd, that 'tis almost a Fault for them to Understand they are ill Used,

B 4 They

The Immodesty

They can't discover their Disgust without Disadvantage, nor Blush without disservice to their Modesty. To appear with any skill in such Cant, looks as if they had fallen upon ill Conversation ; or managed their Curiosity amiss. In a Word, he that treats the Ladies with such Discourse must conclude either that they like it, or they do not. To suppose the first, is a gross Reflection upon their *Virtue*. And as for the later Case, it entertains them with their own Aversion ; which is ill-Nature, and ill-Manners enough in all Conscience. And in this Particular, *Custom* and *Conscience*, the Forms of Breeding, and the Maxims of Religion, are on the same Side. In other Instances, *Vice* is often too fashionable ; But here a Man can't be a Sinner, without being a Clown.

In this respect the *Stage* is faulty to a Scandalous Degree of Nauseousness and Aggravation. For

1st. The *Poets* make Women speak Smuttily. Of this the Places before mention'd are sufficient Evidence : And if there was Occasion they might be Multiplied to a much greater Number : Indeed the *Comedies* are seldom clear of these Blemishes : And sometimes you have them in *Tragedy*. For Instance:

The

The *Orphans Monimia* makes a very improper Description ; And the Royal *Leonora*, in the *Spanisb-Fryar*, runs a strange Length in the History of Love, p. 50. And do Princesses use to make their Reports with such fulsom Freedoms ? Certainly this *Leonora* was the first Queen of her Family. Such Raptures are too Luscious for *Joan of Naples*. Are these the *Tender Things* Mr. *Dryden* fays the Ladies call on him for ? I suppose he means the Ladies that are too Modest to shew their Faces in the Pit. This Entertainment can be fairly design'd for none but such. Indeed it hits their Palate exactly. It regales their Lewdness, graces their Character, and keeps up their Spirits for their Vocation : Now to bring Women under such Misbehaviour, is Violence to their Native Modesty, and a Misrepresentation of their Sex.

For Modesty as Mr. *Rapin* observes, is ^{R. S. B. up.} the *Character* of Women. To represent them without this Quality, is to make Monstres of them, and throw them out of their Kind. *Euripides*, who was no negligent Observer of Humane Nature, is always careful of this Decorum. Thus *Phedra*, when posseſſ'd with an infamous Passion, takes all imaginable Pains to conceal it. She is as regular

*See Daviſ's
Life of Garrick
Vol. 2. p. 372.*

*Eurip.
Hippolit.*

The Immodesty

Hamlet.

gular and reserv'd in her Language as the most virtuous Matron. 'Tis true, the force of Shame and Desire ; The Scandal of Satisfying, and the Difficulty of parting with her Inclinations, disorder her to Distraction. However, her Frensy is not Lewd ; She keeps her Modesty even after She has lost her Wits. Had *Shakespear* secur'd this Point for his young Virgin *Ophelia*, the Play had been better contriv'd. Since he was resolv'd to drown the Lady like a Kitten, he should have set her a Swimming a little sooner. To keep her alive only to sully her Reputation, and discover the Rankness of her Breath, was very Cruel. But it may be said the Freedoms of Distraction go for nothing ; a Fever has no Faults, and a Man *non Compos*, may kill without Murther. It may be so : But then such People ought to be kept in dark Rooms, and without Company. To shew them, or let them loose, is somewhat unreasonable. But after all, the Modern Stage seems to depend upon this Expedient. Women are sometimes represented *Silly*, and sometimes *Mad*, to enlarge their Liberty, and screen their Impudence from Censure : This Politick Contrivance we have in *Marcella*, *Hoyden*, and *Miss Prue*. How-

*Don Quixote Relaps'd
Love for Love.*

However it amounts to this, Confession ; that Women, when they have their Understandings about them, ought to converse otherwise. In fine ; Modesty is the distinguishing Virtue of that Sex, and serves both for Ornament and Defence : Modesty was design'd by Providence as a Guard to Virtue ; And that it might be always at Hand, 'tis wrought into the Mechanism of the Body. Tis likewise proportion'd to the occasions of Life, and strongest in Youth when Passion is so too. 'Tis a Quality as true to Innocence, as the Senses are to Health ; whatever is ungrateful to the first, is prejudicial to the latter. The Enemy no sooner approaches, but the Blood rises in Opposition, and looks Defiance to an Indecency. It supplies the Room of Reasoning, and Collection : Intuitive Knowledge can scarcely make a quicker Impression ; And what then can be a surer Guide to the Unexperienc'd ? It teaches by sudden Instinct and Aversion ; This is both a ready and a powerful Method of Instruction. The Tumult of the Blood and Spirits, and the Uneasiness of the Sensation, are of singular Use. They serve to awaken Reason, and prevent surprize. Thus the Distinctions of Good and Evil
are

* The Immodesty

are refresh'd, and the Temptation kept at a proper Distance.

2ly. They Represent their single Ladies, and Persons of Condition, under these Disorders of Liberty. This makes the Irregularity still more Monstrous, and a greater Contradiction to Nature, and Probability : but rather than not be Vicious, they will venture to spoil a Character. This mismanagement we have partly seen already. *Jacinta*, and *Belinda* are farther Proof : And the *Double Dealer* is particularly remarkable. There are but Four Ladies in this *Play*, and three of the biggest of them are Whores. A Great Compliment to Quality, to tell them there is not above a quarter of them Honest ! This was not the Roman Breeding. *Terence* and *Plautus* his Strumpets were little People ; but of this more hereafter.

3ly. They have oftentimes not so much as the poor Refuge of a Double Meaning to fly to. So that you are under a necessity either of taking Ribaldry or Nonsense. And when the Sentence has two Handles, the worst is generally turn'd to the Audience. The Matter is so Contrived that the Smut and Scum of the Thought rises uppermost ; And, like a Picture drawn to Sight, looks always upon the Company.

*Mack Astro-
loger Old
Batchelour.*

4ly. And

44. And which is still more extraordinary, the *Prologues*, and *Epilogues* are sometimes Scandalous to the last Degree. I shall discover them for once, and let them stand like Rocks in the Margin. Now here, properly speaking, the *Actors* quit the

Stage, and remove from Fiction into Life. *the Scopings*.
Here they converse with the *Boxes*, and *to the Back* *Pit*, and address directly to the Audience. *Orphan*.
These Preliminary and Concluding Parts, *pp. to Dramatist*, are design'd to justify the Conduct of the *Play*, and bespeak the Favour of the Company. Upon such Occasions one would imagine if ever, the Ladies should be used with Respect, and the Measures of Decency observ'd. But here we have Lewdness without Shame or Example: Here the *Poet* exceeds himself. Here are such Strains as would turn the Stomach of an ordinary Debauchee, and be almost nauseous in the *Stews*. And to make it the more agreeable, Women are commonly pick'd out for this Service. Thus the *Poet* courts the Good Opinion of the Audience. This is the *Dessert* he Regales the Ladies with at the Close of the Entertainment: It seems, he thinks, they have admirable Palates! Nothing can be a greater Breach of Manners than such Liberties as these. If a Man would Study to outrage *Quality*

*Mock Af-
frolger.
Country
Wife.
Clemencie.
Old Batch-
elour.*

The Immorality

lity and Virtue, he could not do it more Effectually. But

sly. Smut is still more insufferable with respect to Religion. The Heathen Religion was in a great Measure a *Mystery of Iniquity.* Lewdness was Consecrated in the Temples, as well as Practised in the *Stews.* Their Deities were great Examples of Vice, and worship'd with their own Inclination. 'Tis no wonder therefore their Poetry should be tinctured with their Belief, and that the *Stage* should borrow some of the Liberties of their Theology. This made *Mercury's* Procuring, and *Jupiter's* Adultery, the more passable in *Amphytrion*; Upon this Score *Gimnausium* is less Monstrous in Praying the Gods to send her store of Gallants. And thus *Charea* defends his Adventure by the precedent of *Jupiter* and *Danae.* But the Christian Religion is quite of another Complexion. Both it's Precepts, and Authorities, are the highest discouragement to Licentiousness. It forbids the remotest Tendencies to Evil, banishes the Follies of Conversation, and obliges up to Sobriety of Thought. That which might pass for Raillery, and Entertainment in Heathenism, is detestable in Christianity. The Restraint of the Precept, and the Quality of the Deity,

Plaut.

Cistellär.

Terent.

Eunuck.

ty, and the Expectations of Futurity, quite alter the Case:

But notwithstanding the Latitudes of Paganism, the Roman and Greek Theatres were much more inoffensive than ours. To begin with *Plautus*. This Comedian, tho' the most exceptionable, is modest upon the Comparison. For

1st. He rarely gives any of the above-mention'd Liberties to Women; And when there are any Instances of the contrary, 'tis only in Prostituted and Vulgar People; And even these, don't come up to the Grossness of the Modern Stage.

For the Purpose. *Cleereta* the Procuress borders a little upon Rudeness: *Lena Cifellar.* and *Bacchis* the Strumpet are Airy *Bacchid.* and somewhat over-merry, but not *Ab Angloise* obscene. *Chalinus* in Wo-*casin.* man's Cloaths is the most remarkable.

Pasicompa, *Charinus* his Wench, talks too *Mercat.* freely to *Lysimachus*; And so does *Sophro-* *act. 3.* *clidisca*, Slave to *Lemnoselene*. And lastly: *Perfa.* *Phronesium* a Woman of the Town uses a *Trucul.* double entendre to *Stratophanes*. These are the most censurable Passages, and I think all of them with relation to Women; which considering how the World goes is very moderate. Several of our Single Plays shall far out-do all This put

put together. And yet *Plautus* has upon the Matter left us Twenty entire *Comedies*. So that in short, these Roman Lasses are meer *Vestal Virgins*, comparatively speaking.

Persa.

Trinumm.

AB. 2. 1.

AB. 2. 2.

2ly. The *Men* who talk intemperately are generally *Slaves*; I believe *Dor-dalus* the Pander, and *Lusiteles* will be found the only exception: And this latter young Gentleman, drops but one over-airy Expression: And for this Freedom, the Poet seems to make him give Satisfaction in the rest of his Character. He disputes very handsomly by himself against irregular Love; The Discourse between him and *Philo* is instructive and well-managed. And afterwards he gives *Lesbonicus* a great deal of sober Advice, and declaims heartily against Luxury and Lewdness. Now by confining his Rudeness to little People, the Fault is much extenuated. For First, the representation is more Natural this way; And which is still better, 'tis not so likely to pass into Imitation: Slaves and Clowns are not big enough to spread Infestation, and set up an ill Fashion. 'Tis possible the Poet might contrive these *Pe-sants* Offensive to discountenance the Practice. Thus the *Heilots* in *Sparta* were made drunk to keep Intemperance out of Credit

Credit. I don't mention this as if I approv'd the Expedient, but only to shew it a Circumstance of Mitigation and Excuse.

Farther, These *Slaves* and *Pandars* seldom run over and Play their Gambols before Women. There are but Four Instances of this kind as I remember, *Olympio*, *Palestrio*, *Dordalus*, and *Stratilax* are the Persons. And the Women they Discourse with, are two of them Slaves, and the third a Wench. But with our *Dramatists*, the Case is otherwise. With us *Smuttiness* is absolute and unconfined. 'Tis under no restraint of Company, nor has any regard to Quality or Sex. Gentlemen talk it to Ladies, and Ladies to Gentlemen, with all the Freedom and Frequency imaginable. This is in earnest to be very hearty in the Cause: To give Title and Figure to Ill Manners, is the utmost that can be done. If Lewdness will not thrive under such Encouragement, it must e'en miscarry!

4thly. *Plautus's Prologues and Epilogues* are inoffensive. 'Tis true, *Lambinus* pretends to fetch a double entendre out of that to *Panulus*, but I think there is a Strain in the Construction. His *Prologue to the Captivi*, is worth the observing.

*Cofin. Mil.
Glor. Pers.
Trucul.*

of such an ill reputation that it is better
to say *Fabula huic operam date.* Having
said this, we will now proceed to the

Pray mind the Play. The next Words
give the Reason why it deserves regarding.

*Non enim pertractate facta est in oīo spūcōd
Neq; spūcidici insunt verſū immemorabiles.*

We see here the Poet confesses Smut a
Scandalous Entertainment : That such Li-
berties ought to fall under Neglect, to
die unmention'd, and be blotted out of
Memory.

And that this was not a Copy of his
Countenance, we may learn from his
Compositions. His best Plays are almost
always Modest, and clean Complexion'd.
His *Amphytrio*, excepting the unguine
Addition, is such. His *Epidicus*, the Ma-
ster-piece of his whole Collection, is inof-
fensive throughout : And so are his *Me-
nechmi*, *Rudens*, and *Trinummus*, which
may be reckon'd amongst some of his next
Best. His *Traculentus*, another fine Play
(though not entire) with a Heathen Al-
lowance, is pretty Passable. To be short :
Where he is most a Poet, he is generally
least a Buffoon. And where the Enter-
tainment is Smut, there is rarely any other
Dish well dress'd : The Contrivance is
com-

commonly Wretched, the Sense lean and full of Quibbles. So that his Understanding seems to have left him when he began to abuse it.

To conclude, *Plautus* does not dilate upon the Progres, Successes, and Disappointments of *Love*, in the *Modern Way*. This is nice Ground, and therefore he either stands off, or walks gravely over it. He has some Regard to the Retirements of Modesty, and the Dignity of Humane Nature, and does not seem to make Lewdness his Business. To give an Instance : *Silenum* is much gone in *Love*, ^{*Cifellar.*} but Modest withal, though formerly De- ^{*A. 1.*} bauch'd.

She is sorry her Spark was forced from her, and in Danger of being lost. But then she keeps within compass, and never flies out into Indecency. *Alesimarchus* is strangely smitten with this *Silenum*, and almost distracted to recover her. He is ^{*Ibid. A. 2.*} uneasy and blusters, and threatens, but his Passion goes off in Generals. He Paints no Images of his Extravagance, nor descends to any nauseous Particulars.

And yet after all, *Plautus* wrote in an Age not perfectly refin'd, and often seems to design his Plays for a Vulgar Capacity. 'Twas upon this View I suppose his *Char-
acters* exceed Nature, and his ill Features

The Immobility

are drawn too large : His Old Men over-Credulous, his Misers Romantick, and his Coxcombs improbably Singular. And 'tis likely for this Reason his *Slaves* might have too much Liberty.

Heauton.

Terence appear'd when Breeding was more exact, and the *Town* better polish'd ; And he manages accordingly : He has but one faulty bordering Expression, which is that of *Chremes* to *Clitiphō*. This single Sentence apart, the rest of his Book is (I think) unfullied , and fit for the nicest Conversation. I mean only in reference to the Argument in Hand , for there are things in Him, which I have no intention to warrant. He is extremely careful in the Behaviour of his Women. Neither *Glycerium* in *Andria*, *Pamphila* in *Eunuchus*, or *Pamphila* in *Adelphi*, *Phanium* in *Phormio*, or *Philumena* in *Hecyra*, have any share of Conversation upon the Stage. Such Freedom was then thought too much for the Reservedness of a Maiden-Character. 'Tis true, in *Heautontimoroumenos* the Poet's Plot obliged *Antiphila* to go under the Disguise of *Bacchis* her Maid. Upon this Occasion they hold a little Discourse together : But then *Bacchis*, though she was a Woman of the *Town*, behaves her self with all the Decency imaginable. She does not talk in

in the Language of her Profession : But commends *Antiphila* for her Virtue : *Antiphila* only says how constant she has been to *Clinis*, seems Surprised at his Arrival, and Salutes him civilly upon't, and we hear no more from her. Mr. Dryden seems to refer to this *Conduct* in his Dramatick Poesie. He Censures the Romans for making *Mutes* of their single Women. This he calls the *Breeding of the Old Elizabeth way, which was for Maids to be seen, and not to be heard.* Under Favour the old Discipline would be very serviceable upon the Stage. As Matters go, the *Mutes* are much too few. For certainly 'tis better to say nothing, than talk out of Character, and to ill purpose.

To return. The Virgin injured by *Charea* does nothing but weep, and won't so much as speak her Misfortune to the *Eusuch.* Women. But Comedy is strangely improved since that time ; For *Dalinda* has a great deal more Courage, though the loss of her Virtue was her own Fault. *Love Tri-
umpf.*

But *Terence* has that regard for Women, that he won't so much as touch upon an ill Subject before them. Thus *Chremes* was ashamed to mention any thing about his Son's Lewdness when his Wife was present.

Heauton.
A. 5. 4.

Eunuch.
A. 5. 4. 5.
Adelph.
A. 2. 3.

Pudet dicere hac presente verbum turpe.

The Slaves in this Comedian are kept in Order, and civilly Bred. They Guard and Fence when Occasion requires, and step handsomly over a dirty Place. The Poet did not think Little ness and Low Education, a good Excuse for Ribaldry. He knew Infection at the weakest, might seize on some Constitutions: Besides the Audience was a Superior Presence, and ought to be consider'd. For how Negligent soever People may be at Home, yet when they come before their Betters, 'tis *Manners* to look wholsom.

Now though *Plautus* might have the richer Invention; *Terence* was always thought the most judicious Comedian. His Raillery is not only finer, and his Style better polish'd; but his Characters are more Just, and he seems to have reach'd farther into Life than the other. To take Leave of this Author, even his Strumpets are better behaved than our honest Women, than our Women of Quality of the English-Stage. *Bacchis* in *Heautontimoroumenos*, and *Bacchis* in *Hecyra*, may serve for Example. They are both modest, and converse not unbecoming their Sex. *Thais*, the most Accomplished in her

her way, has a great deal of Spirit and Wheedling in her Character; but talks no Smut.

Thus we see with what Caution and Sobriety of Language *Terence* manages. 'Tis possible this Conduct might be his own *Moderation*, and result from Judgment and Inclination. But however his Fancy stood, he was sensible the Coarse way would not do. The *Stage* was then under Discipline, the Publick Censors formidable, and the Office of the *Choragus* was originally to prevent the Excesses of Liberty.

To this we may add, the *Nobles* had no Relish for Obscenity; 'twas the ready way to Disoblige them. And therefore 'tis *Horace's Rule*,

Nec immunda crepant ignominiosaque dicta. *De Arte Poet.*
Offenduntur enim quibus est Equus, & Pater,

& res.

The old *Romans* were particularly careful there Women might not be affronted in Conversation: For this reason the Unmarried kept off from Entertainments for fear of learning new Language. And in *Greece* no Woman above the degree of a *Slave*, was treated Abroad by any but Relations. 'Tis probable the old Comedy was silenced at *Athens* upon this Score, as

The Immorality

Arist. lib. well as for Defamation. For as *Aristophila*
4. de Mor, observes, the new Set of Comedians were
cap. 14. much more modest than the former. In
Vit. Eurip. this Celebrated Republick, if the Poets
Ed. Cantab. wrote any thing against Religion or Good
1694. Manners, they were tried for their *Mis-*
behaviour, and liable to the highest For-
feitures.

It may not be amiss to observe, that there are no Instances of Debauching *Mari-*
ried Women, in *Plautus*, nor *Terence*, nor yet in *Aristophanes*. But on our Stage how
common is it to make a Lord, a Knight, or an Alderman a Cuckold? The Schemes
of Success are beaten out with great va-
riety, and almost, drawn up into a Sci-
ence. How many Snares are laid for the
undermining of *Virtue*, and with what
Triumph is the Victory proclaim'd? The
Fineness of the *Plot*, and the Life of the
Entertainment often lies in these Contriv-
ances. But the *Romans* had a different
Sense of these *Matters*, and saw through
the Consequences of them. The Govern-
ment was awake upon the Theatre, and
would not suffer the Abuses of Honour,
and Family, to pass into Diversion. And
before we part with these *Comedians* we
may take notice that there are no Smutty
Songs in their *Plays*; in which the *English*
are extremely Scandalous. Now to work
up

up their Lewdness with *Versa*, and *Musick*, doubles the Force of the *Mischief*.^{Loue Tri-umpb, &c.} It makes it more portable and at Hand, and drives it Stronger upon Fancy and Practice.

To dispatch the *Latinus* altogether, *Sene-*
ca is clean throughout the Piece; and stands generally off from the point of Love. He has no Courting unless in his *Hercules Furens*: And here the Tyrant *Lyens* address-^{p. 14.}
^{Ed. Scriv.}es *Megara* very briefly, and in modest and remote Language. In his *Thebais*, *Oedipus*'s Incest is reported at large, but without any shocking Description. 'Tis granted *Phaedra* speaks her Passion plainly out, and owns the strength of the Impression, and is far less prudent than in *Euripides*. But though her Thoughts appear too freely, her Language is under Discipline.^{Hippol.}

Let us now travel from *Italy* into *Greece*, and take a View of the Theatre at *Athens*. In this City the Stage had both its Beginning and highest Improvement. *Eschylus* was the first who appear'd with any Reputation. His Genius seems Noble, and his Mind Generous, willing to transfuse it self into the Audience, and inspire them with a Spirit of Bravery. To this purpose his Stile is Pompous, Martial, and Enterprising. There is Drum and Trumpet in his Verse.

Verse. 'Tis apt to excite an Heroick Ardour, to awaken, warm, and push forward to Action. But his Metal is not always under Management. His Inclination for the *Sublime*, carries him too far: He is sometimes Embarrass'd with *Epithets*. His Metaphors are too stiff, and far fetch'd; and he rises rather in Sound, than in Sense. However generally speaking, his Materials are both shining and solid, and his Thoughts lofty, and uncommon. This Tragedian had always a Nice regard to Good Manners. He knew corrupting the People was the greatest Difservice to the Commonwealth; And that Publick Ruine was the effect of general Debauchery. For this Reason he declines the Busines of Amours, and declares expressly against it. Now here we can't expect any length of Testimony. His Aversion to the Subject makes him touch very sparingly upon it. But in this Case, there is no need of much Citation. His very Omissions ate Arguments, and his Evidence is the stronger for being short. That little I meet with shall be produced.

*Arioph.
Ran.*

*Xenoph.
263. Ed.
Steph.*

*Orest. 48
Ed. Canab.*

1st. *Orestes* was obliged by the Oracle to revenge his Father's Death in the Murther of his Mother. When he was going to kill her, he mentions her Cruelty, but waves her Adultery. *Euripides* ap-

approv'd this Reservedness and make his *Electra* practise it upon the same Occasion. *Æschylus* in his next Play, complements his Country with a great deal of Address in the *Persons* of the *Eumenides*. They are very Gentile and Poetical in their Civilities: Among other things they wish the Virgins may all Marry and make the Country Populous: Here the *Poet* does but just glance upon the Subject of Love; and yet he governs the Expression with such care,^{Euphr.} 305. that the wishes contain a Hint to Sobriety, and carry a Face of Virtue along with them.

The *Double Dealer* runs Riot upon such an Occasion as this; and gives Lord *Touchwood* a mixture of Smut and Pedantry to conclude with, and yet this Lord was one of his best Characters: But *Poets* are now grown Absolute within themselves, and may put Sense and Quality upon what Drudgeries they please. To return. *Danaus* cautions his Daughters very handsomly in point of Behaviour. They were in a strange Country, and had Poverty and Dependance to struggle with: These were Circumstances of Danger, and might make him the more pressing. He leaves therefore a solemn Charge with them for their Security, bids them never to subsist upon Infamy,

my, but to prefer their Virtue to their Life.

Init. 340.

Μόνος οὐλαζει τάς δ' ἐπιστολας πατρος
Τα Γαρενούς τημῶν το βίον πλέον.

Our Poets I suppose would call this Preaching, and think it a dull Business. However I can't forbear saying an honest Heathen is none of the worst Men: A very Indifferent Religion well Believed, will go a great way.

To proceed. *Sophocles* appear'd next upon the Stage, and was in earnest an Extraordinary Person. His Conduct is more Artificial, and his Style more just, than that of *Aeschylus*. His Characters are well drawn, and Uniform with themselves: His *Incidents*, are often surprising, and his *Plots* unprecipitated. There is nothing but what is Great, and Solemn Throughout. The Reasoning is well colour'd. The Figures are sometimes Bold, but not Extravagant. There are no Flights of Bombast, no Towering above Nature and Possibility: In short, nothing like *Don Sebastian's Reigning in his Atomes*.

*Don Sebraft.
p. 12.*

This Tragedian like *Aeschylus* does not often concern himself with *Amours*, and when he does, nothing can be more temperate, and decent. For Example where
the

the Incest of *Oedipus* is described, the Offensiveness of the Idea is screen'd off and broken by Metaphorical and distant Expressions. In another Play, *Creon* resolves to put *Antigone* to Death for presuming to bury *Polyneices*. This Lady and *Hemon* *Creon's* Son were very far engaged; *Hemon* endeavours to dissuade his Father from *Antigones* Execution: He tells him the burying her Brother tho' against his Order, was a popular Action. And that the People would resent her being Punish'd: But never so much as mentions his own Concern unless in one Line; which was so obscure, that *Creon* misunderstood him. *Antigone* amongst her other Misfortunes laments her dying Young and Single, but says not one word about *Hemon*. The Poet takes care not to bring these two Lovers upon the Stage together, for fear they might prove unmanageable. Had they been with us, they had met with kinder treatment. They might have had Interviews and Time and Freedom enough. Enough to mud their Fancy, to tarnish their Quality, and to make their Passion Scandalous. In the Relation of *Hemon's* Death, his Love is related too, and that with all the Life and Pathos imaginable. But the Description is within the Terms of Honour; The tendernesses are Solemn, as well as Soft: They

Oedip. Tr.
ran. Ed.
Steph.

Antig.
242, 244

Ibid. 264.

The Immodesty

Bid. 264. They move to Pity and Concern, and go no farther. In his *Trachinia* the *Chorus* owns the Force of Love next to irresistible; gently hints the Intrigues of the Gods, and then passes on to a handsom Image of the Combat between *Achelous* and *Hercules*.

Trach. 34^r

We see how lightly the Poet touches upon an amorous Theme: He Glides along like a Swallow upon the Water, and skims the Surface, without dipping a Feather.

Sophocles will afford us no more, let us therefore take a View of Euripides. 'Tis the Method of this Author to decline the Singularities of the Stage, and to appear with an Air of Conversation. He delivers great Thoughts in Common Language, and is dress'd more like a Gentleman than a Player. His Distinction lies in the perspicuity of his Style; In Maxim, and Moral Reflection; In his peculiar Happiness for touching the Passions, especially that of Pity: And lastly, In exhausting the Cause, and Arguing *Pro* and *Con*, upon the stretch of Reason. So much by way of Character. And as for the Matter before us, He is entirely Ours. We have had an Instance or two already in *Electra* and *Phædra*: To go on to the rest. In his *Hippolytus* he calls Whoring, Stupidness and playing the Fool. And to be Chaste and Regular, is with him, as well as with

with *Aeschylus*, *Euripides*. As much as to say, 'tis the Consequence of Sense, and right Thinking. *Phaedra* when her Thoughts were embarrass'd with *Hippolytus*, endeavours to disintangle her self by Argument. She declaims with a great deal of Satyr against intemperate Women; she concluded rather to die than dishonour her Husband and Stain her Family. The Blemishes of Parents, as she goes on, often stuck upon their Children, and made them appear with Disadvantage. Upon this, the *Chorus* is transported with the Virtue of her Resolution, and cries out.

Maeia 78
Mac. Ed.
Cant. 241,
250, 252.

Φειδ Φειδ. Τδ σύρρον οε ἀπαρταχῆ καλῶν
Καὶ δέξαν ἐθλῶν ἔργοντος κομίζεται.

Ibid. 232,
233.

How becoming a Quality is Modesty in all Places?

How strangely does it burnish a Character, and oblige ones Reputation?

The Scholiast upon these Verses of *Hippolytus*

Σοὶ τὸ γέ πλεκτὸν Στέφανον εἴξ αὐτούς
ΑγαμῆνΩ, &c.

Makes this Paraphrase. That a Poet's Mind should be clean and unspotted: And that the Muses being Virgins, their Performances

'formances should agree with their Condition.

Androm.
p. 303.

*Iphig. in
Aulid.* p. 51

Helen. 275.
278.

*Mourning
Bride.* p. 36.

To proceed. *Hermione* complains against *Andromache* because she was entertain'd by her Husband: For this *Andromache* tells her she talk'd too much for a Young Woman, and discover'd her Opinion too far. *Achilles* at the first sight of *Clytemnestra*, lets her understand he was as much taken with the Sobriety of her Air, as with the rest of her fine Face and Person. She receives the Complement kindly, and commends him for commanding Modesty.

Menelaus and *Helen* after a long Absence, manage the surprize of their good Fortune handsomly. The most tender Expression stands clear of ill meaning. Had *Osmín* parted with *Almeria* as civilly as these Two met, it had been much better. That Rant of Smut and Profaneness might have been spared. The Reader shall have some of it.

*O my Almeria !
What do the Damn'd endure but to despair,
But knowing Heaven, to know it lost for ever.*

Were it not for the *Creed*, these Poets would be cramp't in their Courtship, and Mightily at a loss for a Simile! But *Osmín* is in a wonderful Passion. And truly

truly I think his Wits are in some Danger,
as well as his Patience. You shall hear.

*What are all Wracks, and Whips, and Wheels
to this?*

*Are they not sooth ing Softness, sinking Ease,
And wasting Air to this?*

Sinking Ease, and wasting Air, I confess
are strange Comforts : This Comparison
is somewhat oddly equipp'd, but Lovers,
like sick People, may say what they please.
Almeria takes this Speech for a Pattern,
and suits it exactly in her return ;

*O I am struck, thy Words are Bolts of Ice ;
Which shot into my Breast, now melt and
chill me.*

*Bolts of Ice ; Yes most certainly ! For
the Cold is struck up into her Head, as
you may perceive by what follows :*

I chatter, shake, and faint with thrilling Fears.

By the way, 'tis a mighty wonder to
hear a Woman Chatter ! But there is no
jesting, for the Lady is very bad. She
won't be held up by any Means, but Crys
out,

—lower yet, down, down :

D

One

The Immobility

One would think she was learning a Spaniel to Sett. But there's something behind.

— no more we'll lift our Eyes,
But prone and dumb, Rot the firm Face of
Earth,
With Rivers of incessant scalding Rain.

These Figures are some of them as stiff as Statues, and put me in mind of Sylvester's *Dubartas*.

Now when the Winter's keener breath began
To Chrystallize, the Baltick Ocean,
To glaze the Lakes, to bridle up the Floods,
And periwig with Snow the bald-pate Woods.

*Spanisb.
Friar. Ep.
Ded.*

I take it, the other Verses are somewhat of Kin to these, and shall leave them to Mr. Dryden's Reflection. But then as for Soothing Softness, Sinking Ease, Wasting Air, thrilling Fears, and incessant Scalding Rain; It puts me to another stand. For to talk a little in the way of the Stage. This Litter of Epithets makes the Poem look like a Bitch over-stock'd with Puppies, and sucks the Sense almost to Skin and Bone. But all this may pass in a Play-House: False Rhetorick and false Jewels, do well together. To return to Euripides. Cassandra in reporting the Misfortunes of the

the Greek stops at the Adulteries of Clytemnestra and Egiala, and gives this handsom reason for making a Halt :

*Σινάρ δύναντος τὰ ἴγεα μηδὲ μένειν
Τέρποιται δέ τοι τις οὐμένει καρδία.*

Tread p.
146.

*Foul Things are best unsaid, I'm for no Muse,
That loves to flourish on Debauchery.*

Some Things are dangerous in Report, as well as practice, and many times a Disease in the Description. This Euripides was aware of, and manag'd accordingly; and was remarkably regular both in Style and Manners. How wretchedly do we fall short of the Decencies of Heathenism! There's nothing more ridiculous than Modesty on our Stage. 'Tis counted an ill-bred Quality, and almost shamed out of Use. One would think Mankind were not the same, that Reason was to be read Backward, and Virtue and Vice had changed Place.

What then? Must Life be huddled over, Nature left imperfect, and the Humour of the Town not shewn? And pray where lies the Grievance of all this? Must we relate whatever is done, and is every Thing fit for Representation? Is a Man that has the Plague proper to make a

D 2

Sight

*Plain Dea
ler. p. 21.*

*Provok'd
Wife. p. 41.*

Sight of? and must he needs come abroad when he breaths Infection, and leaves the *Tokens* upon the Company? What then, must we know nothing? Look you! All Experiments are not worth the making. 'Tis much better to be ignorant of a Disease than to catch it. Who would wound himself for Information about Pain, or smell a Stench for the sake of the Discovery? But I shall have occasion to encounter this Objection afterwards, * and therefore shall dismiss it at present.

* Remarks
upon Quix-
ot.

The *Play-House* at *Athens* has been hitherto in *Quixot*; but are there no Instances to the contrary? Does not *Aristophanes* take great Liberties, and make Women speak extraordinary Sentences? He does so. But his President signifies nothing in the Case. For,

1st. We have both the Reason of the Thing, and all the Advantage of Authority on the other side. We have the Practice and Opinion of Men of much greater Sense and Learning than himself. The best Philosophers and Poets, Criticks and Orators, both Greek and Latin, both Ancient and Modern, give the Cause against him. But *Aristophanes* his own Plays are sufficient to ruin his Authority. For,

1st. He discovers himself a downright Atheist. This Charge will be easily made good

good against him, by comparing his *Nubes* with his other *Plays*. The Design of his *Nubes* was to expose *Socrates*, and make a Town-Jest of him. Now this Philosopher was not only a Person of great Sense and Probity, but was likewise suppos'd to refine upon the Heathen Theology, to throw off the Fabulous part of it, and to endeavour to bring it back to the Standard of Natural Religion. And therefore *Justin Martyr*, and some others of the *Fathers*, look'd on him as a Person of no Pagan Belief, and thought he suffer'd for the Unity of the God-Head. This Man, *Aristophanes* makes fine sport with, as he fancies: He puts him in a Fool's Coat, and then points at him. He makes *Socrates* instruct his Disciple *Strepsiades* in a new Religion, and tell him that he did not own the Gods in the Vulgar Notion. He brings him in elsewhere, affirming, that the Clouds are the only Deities. Which is the same Lash which *Jurnal* gives the Jews, because they worshipped but one single Sovereign Being.

Nil preter Nubes & Cæli numen adorant. *Sat. 14.*

Socrates goes on with his Lecture of Divinity, and declares very roundly, that there is no such thing as *Jupiter*. Afterwards he advances farther, and endeavours

^{P. 106.}

Nub. p. 110. to get *Strepsiades* under Articles to acknowledge no other Gods, but *Chaos*, the *Clouds*, and the *Tongue*. At last the *Poet* brings the Philosopher to publick Penance for his Singularities. He sets Fire to his *School* for teaching Young People (as he pretends) to dispute against Law and Justice; for advancing Atheistick Notions, and Burlesquing the Religion of the Country.

A.F. 5. p. 176.

Plat. Apol. Socrat.

Nub. p. 26.

That *Socrates* was no *Atheist*, is clear from Instances enough. To mention but one: The Confidence he had in his *Dæmon*, or *Genius*, by which he govern'd his Affairs, puts it beyond all dispute. However 'tis plain *Aristophanes* was not of his Religion. The Comedian was by no means for correcting the Common Perswasion. So that he must either be an Orthodox Heathen, or nothing at all. Let us see then with what Respect he treats the received *Divinities*. This *Play*, where one would not expect it, discovers somewhat of his Devotion. In the beginning of it *Phidippides*, who was a sort of New-Market Spark, swears by *Jocky Neptune*, that he had a strange Kindness for his Father *Strepsiades*. Upon this the Old Man replies; *No Jocky, if you Love me; that Deity has almost undone me.* This was making somewhat bold with *Neptune*, who was *Jupiter's* Brother, Sovereign of a whole Element, and had no less

less than the Third share of the Universe ! Certainly *Aristophanes* had no venture at Sea, or else must think the *Trident* signified but very little. But this is meer Ceremony to what follows. In his first *Play*, *Plutus* pretends he had a mind to oblige only Men of Probity ; but *Jupiter* had made him blind, on purpose that he might not distinguish Honest Men from Knaves ; For to be plain, *Jupiter* had a Pique against Good People. Towards the end of this *Comedy*, *Mercury* is abused by *Cario*, and acts a ridiculous, and lessening part himself. Afterwards he complains heavily that since *Plutus* was cured of his Blindness, the Business of Sacrificing fell off, and the Gods were ready to starve. This *Mercury* has the same ill Usage with the Poets Knaves, Informers, and Lewd Women ; From all this stuff put together, his meaning is pretty plain, *viz.* That Religion was no better than an Imposture supported by Art, and Ignorance : And that when Men's Understandings were awake, and their Eyes a little open, they would have more Discretion than to be at any expence about the Gods.

This I take to be part of the Moral of his Fable. If we look farther into him, we shall see more of his Mind. His *Rane* makes Merry with the Heathen Scheme of

Plut. A. I.
Sc. 2.

The Immorality

Heaven and Hell. Here *Charon* and the *Stygian Frogs* are brought in Comically enough. And that you may understand his Opinion more perfectly, we are told, that he that Bilks his *Catamite* after a *Sodomitical Abuse*, is thrown into the Common-shore of *Hades*. And what Company do you think he is lodg'd with? Why with those who Perjure themselves, with those who kick their Fathers and Mothers. It seems in the *Poet's Justice* a Man might as good be false to his Oath, as to his Lewdness. To disappoint the *Stews*, is every jot as great a Crime, as to fly in the Face of Nature, and outrage our Parents. His Quartering his Malefactors thus critically, was without Question on purpose to Banter the Pervasion of future Punishment. In the same *Play*, *Xanthias* bids *Aeacus* answer him by *Jove*, **Ος οὐλύ ιστὴ δημοκράτης*. This little Scoundrel of a Slave has the Manners to make *Jupiter's* Quality no better than his own. To go on with him: In his *Aves* he speaks out to purpose. Here *Pisetharus* tells *Epos*, that if the *Birds* would build a Castle in the Air; they might intercept the Fumes of the Sacrifices, and starve the Gods, unless they would come to, and be Tributary. It seems the *Birds* had very good Pretences to execute this Project; for they were

Ran. p. 188.

were ancienter than *Jupiter* and *Saturn*,
and Govern'd before the Gods. And to
speak truth, were more capable of the
Function. Their Adviser goes on to in-^{p. 536,}
form them, that after they had built their
^{p. 538, 545.} Pensile City, and fortified the Air, their
next Business was to demand their ancient
Sovereignty: If *Jupiter* refused to quit,
they were to declare a Holy War against
him, and the rest of the Confederate
Gods, and to cut off the Communicati-
on between Heaven and Earth. *Pis-
thetarus* grows very warm in his new
Interest and swears by *Jove*, that Men ^{p. 541.}
ought to Sacrifice to the *Birds*, and not
to *Jupiter*. And if Things came to a
Rupture, and *Jupiter* grew Troublesome,^{p. 581.}
he undertakes to send a Detachment of
Eagles against him; with Orders to storm
his Palace with Flambeaux, and fire it
about his Ears At last to prevent the
Calamities of a War, *Hercules* proposes
an Accommodation, and is willing *Ju-
piter* should resign. *Neptune* calls him
a Block-head for his pains, because he
was Heir at Law, and after *Jupiter*'s De-
cease, was of Course to succeed in his Do-
minions. Once more, and I have done:
In *Eirene*, *Trygæus* speaks in a menacing
way; That unless *Jupiter* gave him Sat-
faction in his Busines, he would inform ^{p. 602.}
against

Ibid.

Eiren. 616. against him as a disaffected Person, and a betrayer of the Liberties of *Greece*. I might add many other Instances, and some more Scandalous than any I have mentioned; But these are sufficient to shew the Author's Sentiment: And is it any wonder an Atheist should misbehave himself in point of Modesty? What can we expect less from those who Laugh at the Being of a God, at the Doctrines of Providence, and the Distinctions of Good and Evil? A *Sceptick* has no Notion of Conscience, no Relish for Virtue, nor is under any Moral restraints from Hope or Fear. Such a one has nothing to do but to consult his Ease, and gratifie his Vanity, and fill his Pocket. But how these Ends are compassed, he has no Squeamishness or Scruples about it. 'Tis true when the Methods of Lewdness will take, they are generally most agreeable. This way suits their Talent, and screens their Practice, and obliges their Malice. For nothing is a greater Eye-sore to these Men, than Virtue and Regularity. What a Pleasure is it then to be admired for Mischief, to be reveng'd on Religion, and to see Vice prosper and improve under our Hands! To return: Beside, *Aristophanes*'s Atheism, I have a Second Objection to his Authority, and that is want of Judgment.

ment. If we examine his Plays we shall find his Characters improper, or ununiform ; either wrong at first, or unsteady in the Right. For the purpose : In his *Nubes.* A. 3. S. 3. p. 146, 150. He puts dirty expressions in the Mouth of his Man of Probity, makes him declaim viciously against Vice, and correct Scurrility with Impudence ; Now what can be more idle and senseless, than such Conduct as this ? Especially when this *Justus* as he calls him, had told them in the beginning of his Speech, that People used to be well lash'd for such Fooling, when Government and Discipline were in their due Force. The *Chorus* of his *Rane* slides into the same Inconsistency of Precept, and Practice. Farther, in the Progress of this Play ; *Aeschylus* falls a rallying contrary to his Humour, and lets away his own Arguments at a very unseasonable Juncture, when he was disputing for no less prize than the Laureatship. This *Tragedian* after he had play'd a little with the Story of *Bellerophon*, goes on in the same strain ; and charges *Euripides* that he had furnish'd all sorts of People with Sawciness and Prattle. The Schools and Academies were spoil'd by this means ; So that the Boys were often whip'd, and the Boatswains drubb'd, for their ^{p. 142.} ^{p. 200.} ^{p. 242.}

p. 244.

their Chattering. These Comical Levities come with an ill Grace from *Aeschylus*. His Character was quite different both in Reality, and in the Play before us. He is all along represented as a Person of a serious Temper, of a reserv'd Loftiness, Cholerick, and tender of his Honour to an Excess, and almost in a rage at the Affront of a Rival, and being forc'd to enter the List with *Euripides*. The case standing thus, neither the Man, nor the Business, would admit of Drolling. Another Instance of his want of Conduct we have in his *Concionatores*. Here *Blepyrus* and some others of his Legislative Assembly, talk at a very dirty insipid rate : The Lowest of the *Mob*, can hardly jest with less Wit, and more Lewdness. And to make their Discourse more remarkable ; These douty Members were just going to the *House*, and had their Heads full of the Good of the Nation, when they entertain'd themselves thus decently. And are these little Buffoons fit to consult *de Arduis Regni, &c.* to give Authority to Law, and Rules for publick Life ? Do's Ribaldry and Nonsense become the Dignity of their Station, and the Solemnity of their Office ? To make his *Parliament-Men* play the Fool thus egregiously, must needs have a great deal

p. 700.

p. 708.

deal of *Decorum*, and State-Policy in the Contrivance ; And is just as wise as if a Painter should have Drawn them in the Habit of *Jack-Puddings*, and *Mery-Andrews*. But *Aristophanes* has still higher Flights of Absurdity. He won't so much as spare the Gods, but makes them act these little Parts of Clownishness and Infamy. *Bacchus* and *Hercules* in his *Rane* are forced to talk Smut and rally like *Link-Boys*, and do almost all the Tricks of *Bartholomew-Fair*. To mention something that will bear the quoting. *Bacchus* enquires of *Hercules* the readiest way to *Hades*, or the other World. He bids him either Hang, or Poyson himself, and he cannot miss the Road. This is *Hercules*'s Humour to a Tittle ! And represents him as much to the Life, as an *Ape* would do the *Grand Rane*.^{p.} *Signior* at a publick Audience ! This with a short Sentence or two of Lewdness, is the hardest of *Hercules* his Usage : And 'tis well he escap'd so ; for *Bacchus* is treated much worse. He appears upon the Disadvantages of a Clownish Debauchee, and a Coward.^{p. 192,} And is terribly afraid of a Spectre. When he comes before *Aeneas*, this Judge is very rough with him ; and tries his pretences to a Deity by Bastinado : *Bacchus* howls in the drubbing, and had almost spoil'd all.^{194, 196.} *Aeneas* ^{AB 2 Sc. 6.}

Now

Now do's this paulyry Behaviour agree with the Heathen Theology, with the Common Opinion concerning *Bacchus* and *Hercules*? Do's a *Blew-Cap* and a *Ladle*, become the Sons of *Jupiter*, and the Objects of Religious Worship? Those who at the lowest, were counted the Conquerors of the World, and more than Men both by Birth and Enterprize? *Sophocles* and *Euripides* make these two Persons manage at a quite different rate of Decency. 'Tis no defence to say, *Aristophanes* wrote Comedy, and so was obliged to make his Scenes more diverting. This excuse I say, is defective; for a Comedian ought to imitate Life and Probability, no less than a Tragedian. To Metamorphose Characters, and present Contradictions to Common Belief, is to write *Farce* instead of *Plays*. Such Comedians like *Thespis* ought to have a travelling Stage, and take the Air with *Porcupines* and *Dromedaries*. If 'tis said that Gravity and Greatness do's not suit the Complection and Entertainment of Comedy. To this I answer, that therefore the Persons should be chosen accordingly. They should have nothing in their known Humor and Condition too Noble and solemn for Trifling. 'Tis *Horace's* advice.

Aut famam sequere, aut convenientia finge
Scripтор. De Art. Poet.

Let us remember that Operations always resemble the Nature from whence they flow. Great Persons should therefore have a Correspondent Behaviour assign'd them. To make *Beings* much Superior to the Biggest of Mankind, talk below the Least ; is absurd and ridiculous. This Aristophanes seems sensible of, in his defence of *Aeschylus*. Here Euripides ob-^{Rome. p.}jects to *Aeschylus*, that he was too rum-^{242.}bling, noisy, and bombastick, over-affectiong that which Horace calls

Ampullæ, & sesquipedalia Verba.

To this *Aeschylus* Answers, that the Thoughts, and Designs of *Heroes* must be deliver'd in Expressions proportion'd to their Greatness. It being likely that the Demi-Gods spoke up to their Dignity and Stature : And as they were distinguish'd by the richness of their Habit, so they had a more Magnificent Language than other Mortals. To this *Euripides* replies nothing ; from whence you may conclude the *Poet* thought the Apology not unreasonable. In short, *Aristophanes* had

The Immorality

had Sense, but he does not always use it. He is not equal, and uniform. Sometimes you have him flat and foolish a good while together. And where he has Spirit, 'tis oftentimes lavished away to little purpose. His Buffoonery is commonly too strong for his Judgment. This makes him let fly his Jests without regard to Person or Occasion: And thus by Springing the Game too soon, the Diversion is lost. I could make several other Material Objections against the Conduct of his Plays; But this being not necessary, I shall observe in the

Rene A.J.
Sc. 1. Com-
ciant.

Rene p.
238.

3d. Place. That notwithstanding the scandalous Liberty for which *Aristophanes* is so Remarkable; yet in his Lucid Intervals, when Sense and Sobriety return upon him, he pronounces against his own Practice. In the contest between *Æschylus* and *Euripides*, *Bacchus* is made the Umpire of the Controversie. *Æschylus* begins with a Question, And asks *Euripides* what 'tis which makes a Poet admir'd? He answers. 'Tis for the address of his Conduct, and the handsome Turns of Morality in his Poems. 'Tis because his performance has a Tendency to form the Audience to Virtue, and Improvement. *Æschylus* demands of him farther; But suppose you debauched the Age

Age, and made an Honest and a Brave People Lewd, and good for nothing, what do you deserve then? Here *Bacchus* interposes, and crys out, What does he deserve? A Halter! Pray don't ask so plain a Question. And afterwards we are told that *Poets* are valuable only for describing Things useful, in Life and Religion; for polishing Inventions; and setting off great Examples with Lustre, and Advantage.

In the Progres of the Dispute, *Aeschylus* p. 240.

taxes *Euripides* with being too uncautious in his Representations; and tells him, that *Poets* ought to conceal that which is vicious in Story; and entertain with nothing but Virtue and Sobriety; He goes on Reprimanding *Euripides* for his Dramatick Incests, Strumpets, and Amours: And as p. 242. for himself, to his best remembrance, he 244 never brought any Love-Intrigues upon the Stage.

This is a very significant Expostulation; and contains very good Rules for the Tryal of the *Muses*: But if the English-Stage should be obliged to this Test, *Aristophanes* must set Fire to it, and that with much more Reason than, to *Socrates* his School. Now that *Aeschylus* spoke *Aristophanes's* Sense, is pretty plain: For first As to the Business of Love, *Aristophanes* always declines it; He never patches up a

The Immodesty

Play with Courtship, and Whining, though he wrote nothing but Comedy. In the next place the *Chorus*, which is usually the Poet's Interpreter, speaks honourably of *Aeschylus* even to a Preference; And at last Judge *Bacchus* gives Sentence for him.

p. 255,
267.

Thus we see *Aristophanes* Confutes his own Lewdness, and comes in Evidence against himself. This, with the other two Exceptions I have made good against him, are sufficient to take off the force of the Precedent, and make him an insignificant Authority.

To what I have observ'd from the Stage of the Ancients, I could add the Authorities of *Aristotle*, and *Quintilian*, both extraordinary Persons, but I shall reserve their Testimony till afterwards.

To come Home, and near our own Times: The English-Theatre from Queen Elizabeth to King Charles II. will afford us something not inconsiderable to our purpose.

As for *Shakespear*, he is too guilty to make an Evidence: But I think he gains not much by his Misbehaviour; He has commonly *Plautus's* *Fare*, where there is most Smut, there is least Sense; *Ben Johnson* is much more reserved in his Plays, and declares plainly for Modesty in his *Discoveries*; some of his Words are these.

A

A Just Writer, whom he calls a True Artificer, will avoid Obscene and Effeminate Phrase. Where Manners and Fashions ^{Discov. p.} are Corrupted, Language is so too. The excess of Feasts and Apparel; are the Notes of ^{p. 701.} a sick State; and the Wantonness of Language, of a sick Mind. A little after, he returns to the Argument, and applies his Reasoning more particularly to the Stage. Poetry, (says he) and Picture, both behold Pleasure and Profit, as their common Object, but should abstain from all base Pleasures, lest they should wholly err from their End; And while they seek to better Men's Minds, destroy their Manners: Insolent and Obscene Speeches, and Jests upon the best Men, are most likely to excite Laughter. But this is truly leaping from ^{p. 705;} the Stage to the Tumbrill again, reducing all ^{p. 717.} Wit to the Original Dung-Cart. More might be cited to this purpose, but that may serve for an other Occasion: In the mean time I shall go on to Beaumont and Fletcher.

Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* is remarkably Moral, and a sort of Exhortation to Chastity. This Play met withill Judges; 'twas His'd before half Acted, and seems to have suffer'd on the Account of it's Innocence. Soon after, Ben Johnson and Beaumont appear, and justify the Author ^{Beaumont's &c. Works.} in a Copy of Verses. And as Beaumont

The Immorality

commends Modesty in Fletcher, so he is commended himself by Mr. Earl for the same Quality.

*Such Passions, such Expressions meet my Eye,
Such Wit untainted with Obscenity.*

And as I remember *Jasper Main* has some stroaks to the same purpose. Fletcher is still more full for the Cause. Indeed nothing can be more express. He delivers himself by way of Prologue; where the Poet speaks in his own Person. The Prologue to the *Woman-Hater*, very frankly lets the Audience know what they are to expect. *If there be any amongst you* (says he) *that come to hear Lascivious Scenes, let them depart; For I do pronounce this, to the utter discomfort of all Two-penny Gallery Men, you shall hear no Bawdry in it.* We find in those days Smut was the expectation of a Coarse Palate, and relish'd by none but Two-penny Customers. In the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, part of the Prologue runs thus. *They were banisht the Theare at Athens, and from Rome hisht, that brought Parasites on the Stage with Apish Actions, or Fools with uncivil Habits, or Courtezans with immodest Words.* Afterwards Prologue, who represents a Person, gives us more to the same purpose.

Fly

*Fly far from hence.
All private Taxes, immodest Phrases,
Whatever may but look like Vicious.
For wicked Mirth never true Pleasure brings,
For honest Minds are pleas'd with honest things.*

I have quoted nothing but Comedy in this Author. *The Coronation* is another; And the Prologue tells you there is

*No Undermirth, such as does lard the Scene,
For coarse Delight, the Language here is clean.
And Confident our Poet had me say,
He'll bate you but the Folly of a Play.
For which, altho' dull Souls his Pen despise,
Who think it yet too early to be wise.
The Nobles yet will thank his Muse, at least
Excuse him, 'cause his Thought aim'd at the
best.*

Thus these Poets are in their Judgments clearly ours. 'Tis true, their Hand was not always steady. But thus much may be averr'd, that Fletcher's latter Plays are the most inoffensive. This is either a sign of the Poet's Reformation; or that the exceptionable Passages belong'd to Beaumont, who died first.

To these Authorities of our own Nation, I shall add a considerable Testimony

The Immorality

*Theodore.**Ed. Roven.**Ep. Ded.*

out of Mr. Corneille. This Author was sensible that though the Expression of his *Theodore* was altogether unsmutty, ' Yet the bare Idea of Prostitution unfefted, ' shock'd the Audience, and made the Play miscarry. The Poet protests he took great care to alter the Natural Complexion of the Image, and to convey it decently to the Fancy ; and deliver'd only some part of the History as inoffensively as possible. And after all his Screening and Conduct, the Modesty of the Audience would not endure that little, the Subject forced him upon. He is positive, The Comedies St. Augustine declaim'd against, were not such as the French. For theirs are not Spectacles of Turpitude, as that Father justly calls those of his Time. The French generally speaking, containing nothing but Examples of Innocence, Piety and Virtue.

In this Citation we have the Opinion of the Poet, the Practice of the *French Theatre*, and the Sense of that *Nation*, and all very full to our purpose.

To conclude this *Chapter*. By what has been offer'd, it appears, that the *present English Stage* is superlatively Scandalous. It exceeds the Liberties of all Times and Countries. It has not so much as the poor Plea of a *Precedent*, to which most other ill Things

Things may claim a pretence. 'Tis mostly meer Discovery and Invention: A new World of *Vice* found out, and planted with all the Industry imaginable. *Aristophanes* himself, how bad soever in other respects, does not amplify and flourish, and run through all the Topicks of Lewdneſſ like these Men. The *Miscellany Poems* are like-
wise horribly Licentious. They are sometimes Collections from Antiquity, and often the worst Parts of the worst Poets. And to mend the Matter, the Christian Translation is more nauseous than the *Pagan Original*: Such Stuff I believe was never seen, and suffer'd before. In a word, If Poverty and Diseases, the Dishonour of Families, and the Debauching of Kingdoms, are such valuable Advantages, then I confess these Books deserve Encouragement: But if the Case is otherwise, I humbly conceive the Proceeding should be ſo too.

C H A P. II.

The Profaneness of the Stage.

ANother Instance of the Disorders of the Stage, is their Profaneness; This Charge may come under these two Particulars.

1st. *Their Cursing and Swearing.*
2dly. *Their Abuse of Religion, and Holy Scripture.*

1st. Their Cursing and Swearing.

What is more frequent than their Wishes of Hell and Confusion, Devils and Diseases, all the Plagues of this World, and the next, to each other? And as for Swearing; 'tis used by all Persons, and upon all Occasions: By Heroes, and Pal-troons; by Gentlemen, and Clowns; Love, and Quarrels; Success, and Disappointment; Temper, and Passion, must be varnish'd, and set off with *Oaths*. At some times, and with some Poets, Swearing is no ordinary Relief. It stands up in the room of Sense, gives Spirit to a flat Expression, and makes a Period Musical and Round. In short, 'tis almost all the Rhetorick,

rick, and Reason some People are Masters of: The manner of performance is different. Sometimes they mince the Matter; change the Letter, and keep the Sense, as if they had a mind to steal a Swearing, and break the Commandment without Sin. At another time, the Oaths are clipt, but not so much within the Ring, but that the *Image and Superscription* are visible. These Expedients I conceive are more for Variety, than Conscience: For when the Fit comes on them, they make no difficulty of Swearing at length. Instances of all these kinds may be met with in the *Old Bachelor*, *Double Dealer*, and *Love for Love*. And to mention no more, *Don Quixot*, the *Provok'd Wife*, and the *Relapse*, are particularly Rampant and Scandalous. The English-Stage exceed their Predecessors in this, as well as other Branches of Immorality. *Shakespear* is comparatively sober, *Ben Johnson* is still more regular; And as for *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, in their Plays, they are commonly Profligate Persons that Swear, and even those are reprov'd for't. Besides, the Oaths are not so full of Hell and Desiance, as in the Moderns.

So much for Matter of Fact: And as for point of Law, I hope there needs not many Words to prove Swearing a Sin: For what

*God for
God.*

what is more provoking than Contempt, and what Sin more contemptuous than common Swearing? What can be more Insolent and Irreligious, than to bring in God to attest our Trifles, to give Security for our Follies, and to make part of our Diversi-
on? To play with Majesty and Omnipotence in this manner, is to render it cheap and despicable. How can such Customs as these consist with the Belief of Providence or Revelation? The Poets are of all People most to blame. They want even the Plea of *Bullies* and *Sharpers*. There's no Rencounters, no starts of Passion, no sudden Accidents to discompose them. They swear in Solitude and cool Blood, under Thought and Deliberation, for Busines and for Exercise: This is a terrible Circumstance; It makes all *Malice Preposse*, and enflames the Guilt, and the Reckoning.

And if Religion signifies nothing (as I am afraid it does with some People) there is Law as well as Gospel, against Swearing.

3 Jac. 1. cap. 21. is expressly against the Play-House. It runs thus.

FOR the preventing and abolding of the great abuse of the holy Name of God in Stage-Plays, Enterludes, &c. Be it enacted by our Sovereign Lord, &c. That if at any time, or times, after the End of this present Session of Parliament,

ment, any Person or Persons do, or shall, in any Stage-Play, Enterlude, Shew, &c. Tristlyng or Profanely, speak or use the Holy Name of God, or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost, or of the Trinity, which are not to be spoken, but with Fear and Reverence; shall forfeit for every such Offence, by him or them committed Ten Pound: The one Moiety thereof to the King's Majesty, his Heirs, and Successors; the other Moiety thereof to him, or them, that will sue for the same in any Court of Record at Westminster, wherein no Essoin, Protection, or Wager of Law shall be allow'd.

By this *Act* not only direct Swearing, but all vain Invocation of the Name of God is forbidden. This Statute well executed would mend the *Poers*, or sweep the *Box*: And the *Stage* must either reform, or not thrive upon Profaneness.

3^{ly}. Swearing in the *Play-House* is an ungentlemanly, as well as an unchristian Practice. The *Ladies* make a considerable part of the *Audience*. Now Swearing before Women is reckon'd a Breach of good Behaviour; and therefore a civil Atheist will forbear it. The Custom seems to go upon this Presumption; that the Impressions of Religion are strongest in Wo-

Women, and more generally spread. And that it must be very disagreeable to them, to hear the Majesty of God treated with so little respect. Besides, Oaths are a boistrous and tempestuous sort of Conversation ; generally the effects of Passion, and spoken with Noise, and Heat. Swearing looks like the beginning of a Quarrel, to which Women have an aversion ; as being neither armed by Nature, nor disciplin'd by Custom for such rough Disputes. A Woman will start at a Soldier's Oath, almost as much as at the Report of his Pistol : And therefore a well-Bred Man will no more Swear than Fight in the Company of Ladies.

A Second Branch of the Profaneness of the Stage is their Abuse of Religion, and *Holy Scripture*. And here sometimes they don't stop short of Blasphemy. To cite all that might be Collected of this kind would be tedious. I shall give the Reader enough to justify the Charge, and I hope to abhor the Practice.

To begin with the *Mock Astrologer*. In the First *Act*, the Scene is a *Chappel*, and that the Use of such Consecrated places may be the better understood, the time is taken up in Courtship, Raillery, and Ridiculing Devotion. *Jacinta* takes her turn among the rest. She interrupts *Theodosia*, and cries out : *Wby Sister, Sister----will you pray?*

pray? What injury have I ever done you that
you shou'd pray in my Company? Wildblood
sweats by Mahomet, rallies faintly upon
the other World, and gives the preference
to the Turkish Paradise. This Gentleman ^{p. 31.}
to encourage *Jacinta* to a Compliance in
Debauchery, tells her, *Father is all Eyes* ^{p. 37.}
and no Tongue. That is, it sees Wicked-
ness but conceals it. He Courts much at
the same rate a little before. *When a Man* ^{p. 34.}
comes to a great Lady, he is fain to approach her
with Fear, and Reverence; methinks there's
something of Godliness in't. Here you have
the Scripture burlesqu'd, and the Pulpit-
Admonition apply'd to Whoring. After-
wards *Jacinta* out of her great Breeding
and Christianity, swears by *All*, and *Ma-
hamet*, and makes a Jest upon Hell. Wild- ^{p. 34, 36.}
blood tells his Man that *sith undesigning
Rogues as he, make a Drudge of poor Providence.*
And *Maskall*, to shew his profici-
ency under his Masters, replies to *Bellamy*,
who would have had him told a Lie, *Sir,*
upon the Faith of a Sinner, you have had my ^{p. 55.}
*last Lie already. I have not one more to do
me Credit, as I hope to be saved, Sir.*

In the close of the Play; they make sport
with Apparitions and Fiends. One of the
Devils freezes; upon this they give him
the Blessing of the Occasion, and conclude
he has got cold by being too long out of the Fire. ^{p. 59.}

The

The Profaneness

The *Orphan* lays the Scene in Christendom, and takes the same care of Religion. *Castalia* Complements his Mistress to Adoration.

Orph. p. 10.

*No Tongue my Pleasure and my Pain can tell:
'Tis Heaven to have thee, and without thee Hell.*

Polydor, when upon the attempt to debauch *Montimia*, puts up this Ejaculation.

P. 31.

Blessed Heaven, assist me but in this dear Hour.

Legan.

Thus the *Stage* worships the true God in Blasphemy, as the *Lindians* did *Hercules* by CURsing and throwing Stones. This *Polydor* has another Flight of Profaneness, but that has got a certain Protection, and therefore must not be disturb'd.

In the *Old Batchelour*, *Vain-love* asks *Bellmour*, *Could you be content to go to Heaven?*

P. 19.

Bell. Hum, Not immediately in my Conscience, not heartily.—This is playing I take it with Edge-tools. To go to Heaven in jest, is the way to go to Hell in earnest. In the Fourth *Act*, Lewdness is represented with that Gaiety, as if the Crime was purely imaginary, and lay only in ignorance and precipitens. Have you thoroughly consider'd (says *Fondlewife*) how detestable, how heinous, and how crying a Sin the Sin of

Adul-

Adultery is? Have you weighed I say? For it is a very weighty Sin: And altho' it may lie — yet thy Husband must alſo bear his part; For thy Iniquity will fall on his Head. I suppose this fit of Buffoonry and Profaneness, was to settle the Conscience of young Beginners, and to make the Terrors of Religion insignificant. Belmour desires Letitia to give him leave to swear by her Eyes and her Lips: He Kifles the Strumpet, and tells her, Eternity was in that Moment. Letitia is horribly Profane in her Apology to her Husband; but having the Stage-Protection of Snut for her Guard, we must let her alone. Fondewife stalks under the same shelter, and abuses a plain Text of Scripture to an impudent Meaning. A little before, Letitia when her Intrigue with Belmour was almost discover'd, supports her self with this Consideration. All my comfort lies in his Impudence, and Heaven be prais'd he has a considerable Portion. This is the Play-House Grace, and thus Lewdness is made a part of Devotion! There's another Instance still behind: 'Tis that of Sharpen to Vain-Love, and lies thus. I have been a kind of God-father to you, yonder: I have promis'd and wou'd something in your Name, which I think you are bound to perform. For Christians to droll upon their

The Profaneness

their Baptism is somewhat extraordinary ;
But since the *Bible* can't escape, 'tis the
less wonder to make bold with the *Cate-
chism*.

*Double
Dealer.* p.
34.

p. 36.

p. 55.

p. 40.

In the *Double Dealer*, Lady *Phant* cries out *Jehu*, and talks *Smit* in the same Sen-
tence. Sir *Paul Phant*, whom the Poet
dubb'd a Fool when he made him a Knight,
talks very Piously ! *Blessed be Providence*,
*a poor unmoney Sinner, I am mighty be-
holden to Providence* : And the same Word
is thrice repeated upon an odd Occasion.
The meaning must be, that *Providence* is
a ridiculous Supposition, and that none
but Block-heads pretend to Religion. But
the Poet can discover himself farther if
need be. Lady *Froth* is pleas'd to call *Jehu*
a *Hackney-Coach-man*. Upon this, Brisk no-
plies, *If Jehu was a Hackney-Coach-man, I
am answer'd*, —— you may put that into the
Marginal Notes though, to prevent Criti-
cisms —— only mark it with a small Aster-
isk and say, —— *Jehu was formerly a
Hackney-Coach-man*. This for a heavy Piece
of Profaneness, is no doubt thought a lucky
one, because it Burlesques the Text, and
the Comment, all under one. I could go
on with the *Double Dealer*, but he'll come
in my way afterwards, and so I shall
part with him at present. Let us now
take a view of *Don Sebastian*. And here
the

the Reader can't be long unfurnish'd. Dorax shall speak first.

Shall I trust Heaven—

With my Revenge? then where's my Satisfaction?

No, it must be my own, I scorn a Proxy.

Sebast. p. 9.

But Dorax was a Renegado, what then? He had renounc'd Christianity, but not Providence. Besides, such hideous Sentences ought not to be put in the Mouth of the Devil. For that which is not fit to be heard, is not fit to be spoken. But to some People an Atheistical Rant is as good as a Flourish of Trumpets. To proceed; Antonio tho' a profess'd Christian, mends the matter very little. He is looking on a Lot which he had drawn for his Life: This proving unlucky, after the preamble of a Curse or two, he calls it,

As black as Hell; another lucky saying!

I think the Devil's in me:—good again, *Id. p. 10.*
I cannot speak one Syllable but tends
To Death or to Damnation.

Thus the Poet prepares his Bullies for the other World! Hell and Damnation are strange entertaining Words upon the Stage! Were it otherwise, the Sense in

The Profaneness

these Lines, would be almost as bad as the Conscience. The Poem warms and rises in the working; and the next Flight is extremely remarkable.

p. 47.
*Not the Last Sounding could surprize me more,
 That summons drowsy Mortals to their Doom,
 When call'd in hast they fumble for their
 Limbs.*

Very Solemnly and Religiously expres'd! *Lucian* and *Celsus* could not have ridiculed the Resurrection better! Certainly the Poet never expects to be there. Such a light Turn would have agreed much better to a Man who was in the Dark, and was feeling for his Stockings. But let those who talk of *Fumbling* for their Limbs, take care they don't find them too fast. In the fourth Act, *Mustapha* dates his *Exaltation to Tumult*, from the second Night of the Month Abib. Thus you have the Holy Text abused by Captain Tom; and the Bible torn by the Rabble! The Design of this Liberty I can't understand, unless it be to make *Mustapha* as considerable as *Moses*; and the prevalence of a Tumult, as much a Miracle as the Deliverance out of Egypt. We have heard this Author hitherto in his *Characters*, let us hear him now in his own person. In his *Dedication* of *Aurenge Zebe* he is so hardy

*Id p. 83.
 Exod. xiii.*

4.

as

as to affirm, That he who is too lightly reconciled after high Provocation, may Recommend himself to the World for a Christian, but I should hardly trust him for a Friend. And why is a Christian not fit to make a Friend of? Are the Principles of Christianity defective, and the Laws of it ill contriv'd? Are the Interests and Capacities of Mankind over-look'd? Did our Great Master bind us to Disadvantage, and make our Duty our Misfortune? And did he grudge us all the Pleasures and Securities of Friendship? Are not all these horrid Suppositions? Are they not a flat Contradiction to the Bible, and a Satyr on the Attributes of the Deity? Our Saviour tells us, we must forgive until Seventy times Seven; That is, we must never be tired out of Clemency and Good Nature. He has taught us to pray for the Forgiveness of our own Sins, only upon the Condition of Forgiving others. Here is no exception upon the Repetition of the Fault, or the Quality of the Provocation. Mr. Dryden, to do him right, does not dispute the Precept. He confesses this is the way to be a Christian; but for all that, he should hardly trust him for a Friend. And why so? Because the Italian Proverb says, *He that forgives the second time is a Fool.* This Lewd Proverb comes in for Authority,

and is a piece of very Pertinent Blasphemy ! Thus, in some People's Logick, one Proof from Atheism, is worth ten from the *New Testament*. But here the Poet argues no better than he believes. For most certainly, a Christian of all others is best qualified for Friendship : For he that loves his Neighbour as himself, and carries Benevolence and Good Nature beyond the Heights of Philosophy : He that is not govern'd by Vanity, or Design : He that prefers his Conscience to his Life, and has Courage to maintain his Reason : He that is thus qualified, must be a good Friend : And he that falls short, is no good Christian. And since the Poet is pleas'd to find fault with Christianity, let us examine his own Scheme. *Our Minds* (says he) *are perpetually wrought on by the Temperament of our Bodies, which makes me suspect they are nearer Allied than either our Philosophers, or School-Divines will allow them to be.* The meaning is, he suspects our Souls are nothing but Organiz'd Matter : Or, in plain English, our *Souls* are nothing but our Bodies ; and then when the Body dies, you may guess what becomes of them ! Thus the Authorities of Religion are weaken'd, and the Prospect of the other World almost shut up. And is this a likely Supposition for Sincerity and good Nature ?

Does

Ibid.

Does Honour use to rise upon the Ruins of Conscience ? And are People the best Friends where they have the least Reason to be so ? But not only the Inclinations to Friendship must Languish upon this Scheme, but the very Powers of it are as it were destroy'd. By this Systeme, no Man can say his Soul is his own. He can't be assured the same Colours of Reason and Desire will last. Any little Accident from *without*, may metamorphose his Fancy, and push him upon a new Set of Thoughts ; *Matter* and *Motion* are the most Humorous Capricious Things in Nature ; and withal, the most Arbitrary and uncontroll'd. And can Constancy proceed from Chance, Choice from Fate, and Virtue from Necessity ? In short, a Man at this rate, must be a Friend or an Enemy in spight of his Teeth, and just as long as the *Atoms* please, and no longer : Every Change in *Figure* and *Impulse*, must alter the Idea, and wear off the former Impression. So that by these Principles, Friendship will depend on the *Seasons*, and we must look in the *Weather Glass* for our Inclinations. But this 'tis to Refine upon Revelation, and grow wiser than Wisdom ! The same Author in his Dedication of *Juvenal* and *Persius*, has these Words : *My Lord, I am come to the last Petition of* *Ded. p. 51.*

The Profaneness

Abraham ; If there be ten Righteous Lines
in this vast Preface, spare it for their sake ;
and also spare the next City, because it is but
a little one. Here the Poet stands for *Abraham*, and the Patron for God Almighty : And where lies the Wit of all this ? In the Decency of the Comparison ? I doubt not. And for the *next City* he would have spared, he is out in the Allusion. 'Tis no *Zoar*, but much rather *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* ; Let them take care the Fire and Brimstone does not follow : And that those who are so bold with *Abraham's Petition*, are not forced to that of *Dives*. To beg Protection for a Lewd Book in *Scripture-Phrase*, is very extraordinary ! 'Tis in effect to Prostitute the Holy Rhetorick, and send the *Bible* to the *Brothel* ! I can hardly imagine why these Tombs of Antiquity were raked in, and disturb'd ! Unlesl it were to conjure up a departed Vice, and revive the Pagan Impurities ; unless it were to raise the Stench of the Vault, and Poison the Living with the Dead. Indeed *Juvenal* has a very untoward way with him in some of his Satyrs. His Pen has such a Libertine stroak, that 'tis a Question whether the Practice, or the Reproof, the Age, or the Author, were the more Licentious. He teaches those Vices he would correct

Heathen
Literature.

Juvenal.

correct, and writes more like a Pimp than a Poet. And truly I think there is but little of Lewdness lost in the Translation. The Sixth and Eleventh Satyrs are Particularly remarkable. Such nau-sous Stuff is almost enough to debauch the Alphabet, and make the Language scandalous. One would almost be sorry for the Privilege of Speech, and the Invention of Letters, to see them thus wretchedly abused. And since the Busines must be undertaken, why was not the Thought Blanched, the Expression made remote, and the ill Features cast into Shadows ? I'm mistaken if we have not Lewdness enough of our own Growth, without Importing from our Neighbours. No, this can't be. An Author must have Right done him, and be shewn in his own Shape, and Complexion. Yes by all means ! Vice must be disrobed, and People poi-sou'd, and all for the sake of Justice ! To do Right to such an Author is to burn him. I hope Modesty is much better than Resemblance. The Imitation of an ill Thing is the worse for being exact : And sometimes to report a Fault is to repeat it.

To return to his Plays. In *Love Triumphant*, Garcia makes Veramond this Compliment :

The Profaneness

Lov. Tri. unph. p. 3. May Heaven and your brave Son, and above all, Your own prevailing Genius guard your Age.

What is meant by his Genius, in this place, is not easy to Discover, only that 'tis something which is a better Guard than Heaven. But 'tis no Matter for the Sense, as long as the Profaneness is clear. In this *Act*, Colonel *Sancho* lets *Carlos* know the old Jew is dead, which he calls good news.

Carl. What Jew?

Sanch. Why the rich Jew my Father, he is gone to the Bosom of Abraham his Father, and I his Christian Son am left sole Heir. A very mannerly Story ! But why does the Poet acquaint us with *Sancho's Religion* ? The case is pretty plain : 'Tis to give a lustre to his Profaneness, and make him *burlesque St. Luke with the better Grace.*

Alphonso complains to Victoria that Nature dotes with Age. His reason is, because Brother and Sister can't Marry as they did at first : 'Tis very well ! We know what *Nature* means in the Language of Christianity, and especially under the Nation of a Law-giver. *Alphonso* goes on, and compares the Possession of Incestuous Love to Heaven. Yes, 'tis Eternity in Little.

There is a light allusion to Abraham's bosom It is Richard the 3^d. A. S.

And to Lazarus in Hen. 2^d. P. 1. Act 4. S.

To Nebuchadnezzar & his eating goats in the middle of Heaven ob. 2. 5.

It seems Lovers must be distract'd, or
there's no diversion. A Flight of Mad-
ness like a Faulcons *Lessening*, makes
them the more gaz'd at ! I am now com-
ing to some of the Poet's Divinity. And
here *Vengeance* is said to be so sweet a Morsel,

That Heaven reserves it for it's proper Taste. p. 58.

This belike is the meaning of thoſe Texts.
*that God is good and gracious, and slow to an-
ger, and does not willingly afflict the Children
of Men!* From expounding the Bible, he
goes to the *Common-Prayer*. And as *Carlos*
interprets the *Office of Matrimony*, *For
Better for W^mse*, is for *Virgin* for *Whore*; p. 62.
And that the Reference might not be mi-
ſtaken, the Poet is careful to put the Words
in *Italick*, and great Letters. And by the
way, He falls under the Penalty of the Sta-
ture for Depraving the *Common-Prayer*.

Sancho upon reading a Letter which he
did not like, cries, *Damn it, it must be all
Orthodox.* *Damn* and *Orthodox* clapt toge-
ther, make a lively Rant, because it looks
like Cursing the *Creed*. The most extra-
ordinary Passage is behind ; *Sancho* was
unhappily Married : *Carlos* tells him, *For
your Comfort, Marriage they say is Holy.* *San-
cho* replies : *Ay, and so is Martyrdom, as
they say, but both of them are good for just no-
thing*

The Profaneness

thing, but to make an end of a Man's Life. I shall make no Reflections upon This : There needs no Reading upon a Monster : 'Tis shewn enough by it's own Deformity, *Love for Love* has a strain like this, and therefore I shall put them together : *Scandal* sollicits Mrs. *Foresight* : She threatens to tell her Husband. He replies, *He will die a Martyr rather than disclaim his Passion*. Here we have Adultery dignified with the style of Martyrdom : As if 'twas as Honourable to perish in Defence of Whoring, as to die for the Faith of Christianity. But these *Martyrs* will be a great while in burning, and therefore let no body strive to grace the Adventure, or encrease the Number. And now I am in this *Play*, the Reader shall have more. *Jeremy* who was bred at the University, calls the Natural Inclinations to Eating and Drinking, *Whoreson Appetites*. This is strange Language ! The *Manicheans*, who made Creation the work of the Devil, could scarcely have been thus Coarse. But the Poet was *Jeremy's Tutor*, and so that Mystery is at an end. *Sr. Sampson* carries on the Expostulation, rails at the Structure of Humane Bodies, and says, *Nature has been Provident only to Bears, and Spiders* ; This is the Author's Paraphrase on the 139 Psalm ; and thus he gives God thanks for the Advantage of

Love for Love. p. 49.

p. 26.

p. 27

of his Being ! The Play advances from one Wickedness to another, from the Works of God to the Abuse of his Word. *Foresight confesses 'tis Natural for Men to mi-* p. 47.
stake. *Scandal replies,* You say true, Man will err, meer Man well err—but you are something more—There have been wise Men ; but they were such as you—Men who consulted the Stars, and were observers of Omens—Solomon was wise, but how? — by his Judgment in Astrology. 'Tis very well ! Solomon and Foresight had their Understandings qualified alike. And pray what was Foresight ? Why an Illiterate ^{rd. Per.} Fellow. A pretender to Dreams, Astrology, ^{so. Dram.} Palmistry, &c. This is the Poer's Account of Solomon's Supernatural Knowledge ! Thus the wisest Prince is dwindled into a Gypsie ! And the Glorious Miracle resolved into Dotage, and Figure-flinging ! *Scandal continues his Banter, and says,* the wise Men of the East owed their Instruction to a Star ; which is rightly observ'd by Gregory the Great in favour of Astrology. This was the Star which shone at our Saviour's Birth. Now who could imagine by the Levity of the Occasion, that the Author thought it any better than an *Ignis Fa-*
tus, or *Sydrophel's Kite in Hudibras*? Sir Sampson and the fine Angelica, after some lewd Raillery continue the Allegory, and drive

The Profaneness

drive it up into Profaneness. For this reason the Citation must be imperfect.

Sir Sampf. Sampson's a very good Name, for---your Sampions were strong Dogs from the beginning.

p. 80.

Angel. Have a care--- If you remember the strongest Sampson of your Name, pull'd an old House over his Head at last. Here you have the Sacred History Burlesqu'd, and Sampson once more brought into the House of Dagon, to make sport for the Philistines ! To draw towards an end of this Play. Tattle would have carried off Valentine's Mistress. This latter, expresses his Resentment in a most Divine manner ! Tattle, I thank you, you would have interpos'd between me and Heaven, but Providence has laid Purgatory in your Way. Thus Heaven is debas'd into an Amour, and Providence brought in to direct the Poultry concerns of the Stage ! Angelica concludes much in the same strain. Men are generally Hypocrites and Infidels, they pretend to Worship, but have neither Zeal, nor Faith; How few like Valentine would persevere unto Martyrdom ? &c. Here you have the Language of the Scriptures, and the most solemn Instances of Religion, prostituted to Courtship and Romance ! Here you have a Mistress made God Almighty, Ador'd with Zeal and Faith, and

p. 91.

p. 92.

of the STAGE.

77

and Worship'd up to Martyrdom! This if 'twere only for the Modesty, is strange stuff for a Lady to say of her self. And had it not been for the Profane Allusion, would have been cold enough in all Conscience.

Also "Venus and
Priest's wife"
and some of
its ditties
Songs.

The *Provok'd Wife* furnishes the Audience with a Drunken Atheistical Catch: 'Tis true, this Song is afterwards said to be *Full of Sin and Impudence*. But why then was it made? This Confession is a miserable *Sat. p. 38.* *Prov. Wife* *vo;* and the Antidote is much weaker than the Poyson: 'Tis just as if a Man should set a House in a Flame, and think to make amends by crying *Fire* in the Streets. In the last *Act*, *Rasor* makes his Discovery of the Plot against *Belinda* in Scripture-Phrase. I'll give it the Reader in the Author's Dialogue.

Belind. I must know who put you upon all *id. p. 77.* this Mischief.

Rasor. Sathan and his Equipage: Woman tempted me, Lust weaken'd, —— And so the Devil overcame me: As fell Adam so fell I.

Belind. Then pray, Mr. Adam Will you make us acquainted with your Eve?

Rasor unmasks. This is the Woman Mademoiselle, and that tempted me: But says, *This is the Serpent*
(meaning Lady Fanciful)
that

The Profaneness

that tempted the Woman ; and if my Prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing, should be like the Serpents of old, &c. This Rascal in what we hear of him before, is all Roguery, and Debauch : But now he enters in Sackcloth, and talks like Tribulation in the Alchymist. His Character is chang'd to make him the more Profane; And his Habit, as well as Discourse, is a Jest upon Religion. I am forced to omit one Line of his Confession. The Design of it is to make the Bible deliver an obscene Thought : And because the Text would not bend into a Lewd Application, he alters the Words for this purpose, but passes it for Scripture still. This sort of Entertainment is frequent in the Relapse. Lord Foplington laughs at the Publick Solemnities of Religion, as if 'twas a ridiculous piece of Ignorance, to pretend to the Worship of a God. He Discourses with Berithia, and Amanda in this manner: *Why Faith Madam, -----Sunday is a vile Day, I must confess. A Man must have very little to do at Church that can give an account of the Sermon.* And a little after: *To Mind the Prayers or the Sermon is to mind what one shoud not do.* Lory tells young Fashion. *I have been in a lamentable Fright ever since that Conscience had the Impudence to intrude into your Company.*

His

*Relapse, p.
32, 33.*

His Master makes him this comfortable Answer. Be at peace, it will come no more :
 — I have kic'd it down Stairs. A little before he breaks out into this Rapture. Now Conscience I dese thee ! By the way, ^{p. 44, 45.} we may observe, that this young *Fashion* is the Poet's Favourite. *Berinthia* and *Wor-^{Vid. Infra.} thy*, two Characters of Figure, determine the Point thus, in defence of Pimping.

Berinth. Well, I would be glad to have no Bodies Sins to answer for but my own. But ^{p. 51.} where there is a necessity —

Worth. Right as you say, where there is a Necessity, a Christian is bound to help his Neighbour.

Nurse, after a great deal of profane Stuff, concludes her Expostulation in these words: But his Worship (Young Fashion) over-flows with his Mercy and his Bounty; He is not only pleas'd to forgive us our Sins, — but which ^{John 1. 8.} is more than all, has prevail'd with me to become the Wife of thy Bosom: This is very heavy, and ill-dress'd; And an Atheist must be sharp set to relish it. The Virtuous *Amanda* makes no scruple to charge the Bible with untruths.

— What Slippery stuff are Men compos'd of? Sure the Account of their Creation's false, And 'twas the Woman's Rib that they were form'd of.

Decr.

Thus

Ibid.

The Prodigyess

Thus this Lady abuses her self, together with the Scripture, and shews her Sense, and her Religion, to be much of a Size.

P. 91.

Berinthia, after she has given in a Scheme for the debauching Amanda, is thus accept'd by Worthy : *Thou Angel of Light, let me fall down and adore thee !* A most Seraphick Compliment to a Procurer ! And 'tis possible some Angel or other may thank him for't in due time.

I am quite tired with these wretched Sentences. The Sight indeed is horrible, and I am almost unwilling to shew it. However they shall be Produced like Malefactors, not for Pomp, but Execution. Snakes and Vipers, must sometimes be look'd on, to destroy them. I can't forbear expressing my self with some Warmth under these Provocations. What Christian can be unconcern'd at such intolerable Abuses ? What can be a juster Reason for Indignation than Insolence and Atheism ? Resentment can never be better shewn, nor Aversion more seasonably exerted ! Nature made the Ferment and Rising of the Blood, for such occasions as This. On what unhappy Times are we fallen ! The Oracles of Truth, the Laws of Omnipotence, and the Fate of Eternity are Laugh'd at and despis'd ! That the Poets should

should be suffer'd to play upon the Bible, and Christianity be Hooted off the Stage? Christianity that from such feeble beginnings made so stupendious a progress! That over-bore all the Oppositions of Power, and Learning, and with Twelve poor Men, outstretch'd the *Roman Empire*. That this glorious Religion so reasonable in its Doctrine, so well attested by Miracles, by Martyrs, by all the Evidence that *Fact* is capable of, should become the Diversion of the Town, and the Scorn of Buffoons! And where, and by whom is all this Out-rage committed? Why not by *Julian*, or *Porphirie*, not among Turks or Heathens, but in a Christian Country, in a Reform'd Church, and in the Face of Authority? Well! I perceive the Devil was a Saint in his *Oracles*, to what he is in his *Plays*. His Blasphemies are as much improv'd as his Stile, and one would think the Muse was *Legion*! I suppose the Reader may be satisfied already: But if he desires farther proof, there's something more flamingly impious behind.

The Christian *Almeida* when *Sebastian* was in danger, Raves and Foams like one Possess'd,

*But is there Heaven? for I begin to doubt: Don Se.
Now take your swing ye impious Sin unpunish'd,*

Sebastian, p. 51.

G Eter-

+ In the *Maurtaineers*, Christianity is represented as consisting in drinking wine. "I have got two full flaggons of
X^o in me".

The Profaneness

Eternal Providence seems over-match'd,
And with a slumbering Nod assents to Murther.

In the next Page, the bellows again much after the same manner. The Double Dealer to say the least of him, follows his Master in this Road; *Passibus equis*. Sir Paul Plyant one would think had done his part: But the ridiculing of Providence won't satisfie all People: And therefore the next attempt is somewhat bolder.

Double Dealer, p.
19.
p. 17.
p. 44.

Sir Paul. Hold your self contented my Lady Plyant,--- I find Passion coming upon me by Inspiration. In *Love Triumphant*, Carlos is by the Constitution of the Play a Christian; and therefore must be construed in the Sense of his Religion. This Man blunders out this horrible Expression. Nature has given me my Portion in Sense with a P---- to her, &c. The Reader may see the Hellish Syllable at Length if he pleases. This Curse is borrow'd for *Taung Fashion* in the *Relapse*. The Double Dealer is not yet exhausted. *Cynthia the Top Lady grows Thoughtful*. Upon the question, she relates her Contemplation.

Double Dealer, p.
18.
Gen. 2.
St. Math.

Cynth. I am thinking (says she) that tho' Marriage makes Man and Wife one Flesh, it leaves them two Fools. This Jest is made upon a Text in *Genesis*, and afterwards applied by our Saviour to the Case of Divorce

voice. *Love for Love* will give us a farther Account of this Author's Proficiency in the *Scriptures*. Our Blessed Saviour affirms himself to be the *Way, the Truth, and the Light*; that he came to bear Witness to the *Truth*, and that his *Word is Truth*. These Expressions were remembred to good purpose. For *Valentine* in his pretended Madness tells *Buckram the Lawyer*; *I am Truth, — I am Truth.* — *Love, &c.*
Who's that, that's out of his way, I am Truth, p. 59, 61.
and can set him right. Now a Poet that had not been smitten with the Pleasure of Blasphemy, would never have furnish'd Frensy with Inspiration; nor put our Saviour's Words in the Mouth of a Madman. *Lady Brute*, after some struggle between Conscience and Lewdness, declares in Favour of the later. She says, *the part prop'red of a downright Wife is to Cuckold her Hus-Wife,* p. 3.
band. And tho' this is against the strict Statute-Law of Religion, yet if there were a p. 4 Court of Chancery in Heaven, she should be sure to cast him.

This Brass is double Guilt. First, It supposes no Equity in Heaven. And Secondly, If there was, Adultery would not be punish'd! The Poet afterwards acquaints us by this Lady, that Blasphemy is no Woman's Sin. Why then does she fall into it? Why in the mid'st of Temper, p. 65.

The Profaneness

and Reasoning? What make him break it upon his own Rules? Is Blasphemy never unseasonable upon the Stage, and does it always bring it's excuse along with it? The *Relapse* goes on in the same strain. When *Young Fashion* had a prospect of cheating his Elder Brother, he tells *Lory*,

Relapse, p. 19. Providence thou seest at last takes care of Men of Merit.

p. 26. Berinthia, who has engag'd to corrupt *Amanda* for *Worthy*, attacks her with this Speech, Mr. Worthy used you like a Text, he took you all to pieces, and it seems, was particular in her Commendation. Thus she runs on for several Lines, in a Lewd and Profane Allegory. In the Application, she speaks out the Design, and concludes with this Pious Exhortation! Now consider what has been said, and Heaven give you Grace to put it in Practice; that is, to play the Whore. There are few of these last Quotations, but what are plain Blasphemy, and within the Law. They look reeking as it were from Pandemonium, and almost smell of Fire and Brimstone. This is an Eruption of Hell with a Witness! I almost wonder the Smoak of it has not darken'd the Sun, and turn'd the Air to Plague and Poyson! These are outragious Provocations; enough to arm all Nature in Revenge; To exhaust the Judgments of Heaven, and

and sink the Island in the Sea ! What a spite have these Men to the God that made them ? How do they Rebel upon his Bounty, and attack him with his own Reason ? These Giants in Wickedness, how would they ravage with a Stature Proportionable ? They that can Swagger in Impotence, and Blaspheme upon a Mole-Hill, what would they do if they had Strength to their Good-Will ? And what can be the Ground of this Confidence, and the Reason of such horrid Presumption ? Why the Scripture will best satisfie the question, Because Sentence against ^{Eccles. 8.}
an Evil Work is not executed speedily, wherefore the Heart of the Sons of Men, is fully set in them to do Evil.

Clemency is Weakness with some People ; And the Goodness of God which should lead them to Repentance, does but harden them the more. They conclude he wants Power to punish, because he has Patience to forbear. Because there is a Space between Blasphemy, and Vengeance, and they don't perish in the Act of Defiance ; Because they are not blasted with Lightning, transfixt with Thunder, and Guarded off with Devils, they think there's no such matter as a day of Reckoning. ^{But} ^{Gen. 6.} *let no Man be deceiv'd, God is not mock'd ;* not without danger they may be assured. Let them retreat in time, before the Floods

The Profaneness

run over them : Before they come to that place, where Madness will have no Mufick, nor Blasphemy any Diversion.

And here it may not be amiss to look a little into the Behaviour of the *Heathens*. Now 'tis no wonder to find them run Riot upon this Subject. The Chafacters of their Gods were not unblemish'd. Their Prospect of the other World, was but Dim; neither were they under the Terrors of *Revelation*. However, they are few of them so bad as the *Moderns*.

Terence does not run often upon this Rock. 'Tis true, *Chares* falls into an ill Rapture after his Success. *Chremes* bids his Wife not tire the Gods with Thanks: And *Aeschimus* is quite sick of the Religious part of the Wedding. These Instances, excepting his Swearing, are the most, (and I think near all the) exceptionable Passages of this Author.

Plautus is much more bold. But then his Sallies are generally made by *Slaves* and *Panders*.

This makes the Example less dangerous, and is some sort of Extenuation. I grant this imperfect Excuse won't serve him always. There are some Instances where his Persons of better Figure are guilty of Lewd Defences, Profane Flights, and Sawcy Expostulation. But the Ro-

Lycenides.

Aulular.

A. 2. 4. Pa.

Ieffra Rud.

A. 1. 3.

Debarctus.

Trucul.

A. 2. 4.

man

man Deities were Beings of ill Fame,
 'tis the less wonder therefore if the Poets
 were familiar with them. However,
 Plautus has something good in him, and
 enough to condemn the Practice. Pseudolus
 would gladly have had the Gods change the
 method of Things, in some Particular. He
 would have had frank good Humour & People
 long liv'd, and close-fisted Knowers in Young.
 To this Periplectumnes Gravely answers
 That 'tis great Ignorance, and Misbehaviour
 to Censure the Conduct of the Gods, or speak
 disavourably of them. In his Pseudolus the
 Procurer Ballo talks Profanely. Upon
 which Pseudolus makes this Reflection:
*This Fellow makes nothing of Religion, how
 can we trust him in other matters?* For the Gods whom all People have the greatest rea-
 son to fear, are most slighted by him.

The Greek Tragedians are more stanch,
 and write nearer the Scheme of Natural
 Religion. 'Tis true, they have some bold
 Expressions: But then they generally re-
 prove the Liberty, and punish the Men.
 Prometheus in *Eschylus* blusters with a
 great deal of Noise and Stubborness: He
 is not for changing Conditions with *Aster-*
cary: And chuses rather to be miserable,
 than to submit even to Jupiters himself.
 The Chorus rebuke him for his Pride, and
 threaten him with greater Punishment.

Instances
 of
 Poets on
 the
 Anti-dote

Mil. Glos.
 Vol. I.

A. 1. 3.

Prom. No. 3
 vinc. 57.

And the Poet to make all sure, brings him to Execution before the end of the Play. He discharges Thunder and Lightning at his Head; shakes his Rock with an Earthquake, turns the Air into Whirl-wind, and draws up all the Terrors of Nature to make him an Example. In his Expedition against Thebes, Hercules expects Capaneus would be destroyed for his Blasphemies; Which happen'd accordingly. On the other hand; Amphiaraus being a person of Virtue, and Piety, they are afraid lest he should succeed. For a Religious Energy is almost invincible. Darius's Ghost lays Xerxes's ruin upon the excess of his Ambition. 'Twas, because he made a bridge over the Hellespont, used Neptune contumeliously, and thought himself Superior to Heaven. This Ghost tells the Chorus, that the Persian Army misfancied for the outrages they did to Religion, for breaking down the Bridges, and plundering the Gods.

Ajax's Distraction is represented as judicial in Sophocles. 'Twas inflicted for his Pride and Atheism. 'When his Father bid him be brave, but Religious withal, he haughtily replied, that 'twas for Cowards to beg the Assistance of the Gods; as for his part, he hoped to Conquer without them. And when Minerva encouraged him to charge the Enemy, , He

Ajax. Fla.
gell.

THE STAGE.

He made her this Lewd and impudent
Answer. Pray withdraw, and give
your Countenance elsewhere, I want no
Godesses to help me do my Busines; This
Insolence made *Minerva* hate him;
and was the cause of his Madness and
self Murther. To proceed. The Chor
rus condemns the Liberty of *Zacpha*, who
obliquely charged a Practice upon the Ora
cls: Tho' after all, she did not tax *Apollo*,
but his Ministers.

The same Chorus recommends Piety and
Relyance upon the Gods, and threatens
Pride and Irreligion with Destruction.
In Antigone, *Tiresias* advises *Oedon* to waive
the Rigour of his Edict, and not let the
Body of *Polyneices* die unburied, and ex
pos'd: He tells him the Altars were al
ready polluted with Humane Flesh. This
had made the Language of the Birds un
intelligible, and confounded the Marks of
Angury. *Oedon* replies in a rage, and says,
he would not consent to the Burial of
Polyneices: No, tho' twere to prevent the
Eagle's throwing par of the Carcass in
Jove's Chair of State. This was a bold
Flight; but 'tis not long before he pays
for't. Soon after, his Son, and Queen, kill
them-

*The off're
of the
Ordy. Tyndale
m.s. p. 187.*

p. 188.

*Antig.
p. 256.*

The Profligacy

themselves. And in the close, the Poet, who speaks in the *Chorus*, explains the Misfortune, and points upon the Cause, and affirms, that *Creas* was punisht for his Haughtiness and Impiety. To go on to his *Trachinie*. *Hercules* in all the extremity of his Torture does not fall foul upon Religion. 'Tis true, He shews as much Impatience as 'tis possible. His Person, his Pain, and the Occasion of it, were very extraordinary. These circumstances make it somewhat natural for him to complain above the common rate. The Greatness of his Spirit, the Fever of his Blood, and the Rage of his Paffion, could hardly fail of putting Force, and Vehemence into his Expressions. Tho' to deal clearly, he seems better furnished with Rhetorick, than true Fortitude. But after all, his Disorders are not altogether ungovern'd. He is uneasy, but not impious, and profane.

I grant *Hercules* Actem in *Sparta*, swaggers like a strange Rhodonontading rate. But the Conduct of this Author is very indifferent. He makes a meet *Salamander* of his *Hero*, and lets him declaim with too much of Length, Curiosity and Affection, for one in his Condition: He harangues it with great plenty of Points, and Sentences in the Fire, and lies frying, and melt-

Phi-

Philosophizing for near a Hundred Lines together. In fine, this Play is so injudiciously manag'd, that *Heimius* is confident 'twas written by neither of the Seniors, but by some later Author of a lower Clas.

To return to Sophocles's *Trachinæ*, *Hyllus* reproaches the Gods with Neglect, because they gave *Hercules* no Assistance, and glances upon *Jupiter* himself. This fallacy is not so thoroughly corrected as formerly. 'Tis true, the *Chorus* make some little Satisfaction immediately after. They resolve all surprizes of Misfortune, all Revolutions of States or Families, into the Will and Permission of *Jupiter*. This by implication, they make an Argument for acquiescence. Besides, the Poet had laid in a sort of Caution against Misconstruction before. For the Messenger tells *Djaneira*, that we ought not to Marry at the Conduct of *Jupiter*.

Trach. p.
375.Trach. p.
340.

This for a Heathen is something, tho' not enough. *Cleom. Rant* seems an imitation of it, though 'tis bolder, and has nothing of the rashness of Youth to excuse it. Besides, Sophocles throws in somewhat by way of Preservative. Where-

Cleom. p.
54.
as

The Profaneness

92

as in Cleonides, the Boy Cleonides has the better on the wrong side, and seems to carry the Cause of Atheism against his Father. This Scene of a Famine Mr. Dryden calls a Beauty; and yet methinks Cleon is not very Charming! Her part is to tell you, the Child suck'd to no purpose.

2. 54.

It pull'd, and pull'd but now but nothing came;
At last it drew so hard that the Blood follow'd.
And that Red Milk I found upon it's Lips,
Which made me swoon for Fear.

There's a Description of Sucking for you!
And truly one would think the Nurse on't
were scarcely wean'd. This Lady's Fancy
is just Slip-Socking-hubb; and she seems
to want Sense, more than her Breakfast. If
this Passage would not shine, the Poet
should have let it alone. 'Tis Horace's ad-
vice.

De Arte
Poet.

Et qua
Desperes tractare nescire posse excludere.

The greatest part of the Life of this
Scene is spent in Impious Rants, and Athe-
istical Disputes. To do the Author right,
his Characters never want Spirits for such
Service, either Full or Fasting. Some Peo-
ple love to say the worst Things in the
best

best manner ; to perfume their Potions, and give an Air to Deformity.

There is one ill Sentence in *Sophocles* be-
hind. *Philoctetes* calls the Gods ^{Kings}, and
Libels their Administration. This Offi-
cer we must understand was left upon a
Solitary Island, ill used by his Friends,
and harrass'd with Poverty and Ulcers, for
Ten Years together : There, under the Ig-
norance of Paganism, were trying Circum-
stances, and take-off somewhat of the Ma-
lignity of the Complaint. Afterwards he
seems to repent, and declares his Assu-
rance that the Gods will do Justice, and ^{p. 419.}
prays frequently to them. The Conclusion
of this Play is remarkably Moral. Here
Hercules appears in *Machine* ; acquaints
Philoctetes with his own Glorious Condi-
tion : That his Happiness was the Reward
of Virtue, and the Purchase of Merit. He
charges him to pay a due regard to Reli-
gion ; for Piety would recommend him to
Jupiter more than any other Qualification.
It went into the other World with People,
and they found their Account in't both ^{p. 431.}
Living and Dead.

Upon the whole ; the Plays of *Aeschylus*
and *Sophocles* are formed upon Models of
Virtue : They joyn Innocence with Plea-
sure, and design the Improvement of the
Audience.

In

Philoct. p.
402.

The Profaneness

Act. 2.

P. 295.

Agam.
Act. 3.

In *Euripides's Bacchus*, *Pentheus* is pull'd in pieces for using *Bacchus* with Disrespect. And the *Chorus* observes that God never fails to punish Impiety, and Contempt of Religion. *Polyphemus* blusters Atheistically, and pretends to be as great as *Jupiter*; But then his Eye is burnt out in the fifth Act. And the *Chorus* in *Hercule* affirm it next to Madness not to Worship the Gods. I grant he has some profane Passages stand uncorrected, and what wonder is it to see a *Pagan* Miscarry? *Seneca*, as he was inferiour in Judgment to the *Greeks*, so he is more frequent, and uncautious, in his Flights of Extravagance. His Hero's and Heroines, are excessively bold with the Superior Beings. They rave to Distraction, and he does not often call them to an account for't. 'Tis true, *Ajax Oileus* is made an Example for Blaspheming in a Storm; He is first struck with Thunder, and then carried to the Bottom: The Modern Poets proceed upon the Liberties of *Seneca*. Their Mad-men are very seldom reckon'd with. They are Profane without Censure, and defie the *Living God* with success. Nay, in some respect they exceed even *Seneca* himself. He flies out only under Impatience; and never falls into these Fits without Torture, and hard Usage. But the English

+ In the Tempore.

English Stage are unprovok'd in their Irreligion, and Blaspheme for their Pleasure. But supposing the *Theatres of Rome*, and *Athens*, as bad as possible, what Defence is all this? Can we argue from *Hathorism* to *Christianity*? How can the *Practice* be the same, where the *Rule* is so very different? Have we not a clear Light to direct us, and greater Punishments to make us afraid? Is there no Distinction between Truth and Fiction, between Majesty and a Pageant? Must God be treated like an Idol, and the *Scriptures* banter'd like *Homer's Elysium*, and *Hesiod's Theogony*? Are these the Returns we make him for his Supernatural Assistance? For the more perfect Discovery of himself, the stooping of his Greatness, and the Wonders of his Love? Can't we refuse the Happiness without affronting the Offer? Must we add Contempt to Disobedience, and Out-rage to Ingratitude? Is there no Diversion without Insulting the God that made us, the Goodness that would save us, and the Power that can damn us? Let us not flatter our selves, *Words* won't go for nothing. Profaneness is a most provoking Contempt, and a Crime of the deepest dye. To break through the Laws of a Kingdom is bad enough; but to make *Ballads* upon the

Statute,

The Profaneness

Statute-Book, and a Jeft of Authority, is much worse. Atheists may fancy what they please, but God will Arife and Main-tain his own Cause, and Vindicate his Ho-nour in due time.

To conclude. Profaneness, tho' never so well corrected, is not to be endured. It ought to be Banish'd without Proviso, or Limitation. No pretence of *Character* or *Punishment*, can excuse it; or any *Stage-Discipline* make it tolerable. 'Tis grating to *Christian* Ears, dishonourable to the Majesty of God, and dangerous in the Example. And in a Word, It tends to no point, unless it be to wear off the Hor-rour of the Practice, to weaken the force of Conscience, and to teach the Language of the Damn'd.

C H A P. III.

The Clergy abused by the Stage.

THE Satyr of the *Stage* upon the *Clergy* is extremely Particular. In other Cases, they level at a single Mark, and confine themselves to Persons. But here their Buffoonry takes an unusual Compass: They shoot Chain'd-shot, and strike at Universals. They play upon the *Character*, and endeavour to expose not only the Men, but the Business. 'Tis true, the *Clergy* are no small Rub in the *Poet's* way. 'Tis by their Minististrations that Religion is perpetuated, the other World refresh'd, and the Interest of Virtue kept up. Vice will never have an unlimited Range, nor Conscience be totally subdued, as long as People are so easy as to be Priest-ridden! As long as these Men are look'd on as the Messengers of Heaven, and the Supports of Government, and enjoy their old Pretensions in Credit and Authority; as long as this Grievance continues, the *Stage* must decline of Course, and Atheism give Ground, and Lewdness lie under Censure,

H and

The Clergy Abus'd

and Discouragement. Therefore that Liberty may not be embarrass'd, nor Principles make Head against Pleasure, the *Clergy* must be attack'd, and rendred Ridiculous.

To represent a Person fairly and without disservice to his Reputation, two Things are to be observ'd. First, He must not be ill used by others: Nor, Secondly, be made to play the Fool himself. This latter way of Abuse is rather the worst, because here a Man is a sort of *Felo de se*; and appears Ridiculous by his own Fault. The Contradiction of both these Methods is practised by the Stage. To make sure Work on't, they leave no Stone unturn'd, the whole Common-place of Rudeness is run through. They strain their Invention and their Malice: And overlook nothing in ill-Nature, or ill-Manners to gain their Point.

To give some Instances of their Civility:

18. 16, 20. In the Spanish Fryar, Dominick is made a Pimp for Lorenzo; He is call'd a parcel of *Holy Guts and Garbage*, and said to have room in his Belly for his Church-steeple.

Dominick has a great many of these Compliments bestow'd upon him. And to make the Railing more effectual, you have a general stroke or two upon the Profession. Would you know what are the

Infallible

+ See also Ways & Means: Timon Spring,

The Peddlers at Large: Father Monk
and the Devil in the noble Spectre

Father Duck in the Tavern.

The Road to Ruin. A.B.S. The Will.
Some of Gibbons Songs.

Infallible Church-Remedies. Why 'tis to
Lie Impudently, and Swear Devoutly. A p. 37.
little before this, *Dominick* counterfeits
himself Sick, retires, and leaves *Lorenzo*
and *Elvira* together; And then the Re-
mark upon the Intrigue follows. ' You see, p. 23.
' Madam (says *Lorenzo*) 'tis Interest go-
' vern's all the World. He Preaches against
' Sin, why? Because he gets by't: He
' holds his Tongue, why? Because so much
' more is bidden for his Silence. 'Tis but
' giving a Man his Price, and Principles
' of *Church* are bought off as easily as
' they are in *State*: No Man will be a
' Rogue for nothing; but Compensation
' must be made, so much Gold for so much
' Honesty, and then a Church-Man will
' break the Rules of Chess. For the Black
' Bishop, will skip into the White, and
' the White into the Black, without Con-
' sidering whether the remove be Law-
' ful.

At last *Dominick* is discover'd to the
Company, makes a dishonorable *Exit*, and
is push'd off the Stage by the Rabble. This
is great Justice! The Poet takes care to
make him first a Knave, and then an Ex-
ample: But his Hand is not even. For
Lewd *Lorenzo* comes off with *flying Colours*.
'Tis not the Fault which is corrected, but

The Clergy Abused

the Priest. The Author's Discipline is seldom without a Bias. He commonly gives the *Laity* the Pleasure of an ill Action, and the *Clergy* the Punishment.

To proceed. Horner in his general Remarks upon Men, delivers it as a sort of Maxim, *that your Church-man is the greatest Atheist*. In this Play Harcourt puts on the Habit of a Divine. Alistea does not think him what he appears; but Sparkish who could not see so far, endeavours to divert her Suspicion. *I tell you (says he) this is Ned Harcourt of Cambridge, you see he has a sneaking College-look.* Afterwards his Character is sufficiently abused by Sparkish and Lucy; but not so much, as by Himself. He tells you in an *Aside*, *be must suit his Style to his Coat.* Upon this wise Recollection, He talks like a servile, impertinent Fop.

In the *Orphan*, The Young Soldier Chamont calls the Chaplain Sir *Gravity*, and treats him with the Language of *Thee* and *Thou*. The Chaplain instead of returning the Contempt, flatters *Chamont* in his Folly, and pays a Respect to his Pride. The Cavalier encourag'd, I suppose, by this Sneaking, proceeds to all the Excesses of Rudeness.

*Country
Wife*, p. 6.

J. 35.

Ilid.

— is

— is there not one
 Of all thy Tribe that's Honest in your School ?
 The Pride of your Superiours makes ye Slaves :
 Ye all live Loathsome, Sneaking, Servile lives :
 Not free enough to practise generous Truth,
 Tho' ye pretend to teach it to the World.

p. 25.

After a little Pause for Breath, the Railing improves.

If thou wouldest have me not contemn thy Office,
 And Character, think all thy Brethren Knaves,
 Thy Trade a Cheat, and thou its worst Pro-
 fessor :

Inform me ; for I tell thee, Priest I'll know.

The Bottom of the Page is down-right
 Porter's Rhetorick.

Art thou then
 So far concern'd in't ? —
 Curse on that formal steady Villain's Face !
 Just so do all Bawds look ; Nay Bawds, they say,
 Can Pray upon Occasion ; talk of Heaven ; ibid.
 Turn up their goggling Eye-balls, rail at Vice ;
 Dissemble, Lye, and Preach like any Priest,
 Art thou a Bawd ?

The Old Batchelour has a Throw at the
 Dissenting Ministers. The Pimp Setter pro-

The Clergy Abused

vides their Habit for Bellmour to Debauch
Letitia. The Dialogue runs thus.

Bell. *And hast thou provided Necessaries?*

Setter. *All, all Sir; the large sanctified Hat,*
Old Batch. *and the little precise Band, with a swinging*
p. 19, 20. *long Spiritual Cloak, to cover Carnal Knavery;*---- *not forgetting the black Patch which*
Tribulation Spintext wears as I'm inform'd
upon one Eye, as a penal Mourning for the
Offences of his Youth, &c.

Barnaby calls another of that Character
Mr. Prig, and Fondlerife carries on the
Humour lewdly in *Play-House Cant*; And
to hook the *Church of England* into the
Abuse, he tacks a *Chaplain* to the End of
the Description.

Lucy gives another Proof of the Poet's
good Will, but all little Scurrilities are not
worth repeating.

In the *Double Dealer*, the discourse be-
tween *Maskwell* and *Saygrace* is very nota-
ble. *Maskwell* had a design to cheat *Mel-*
lisfont of his Mistress, and engages the Cha-
plain in the Intrigue: There must be a
Levite in the Case; For without one of them
have a finger in't, no Plot publick, or private
can expect to prosper.

To go on in the order of the Play.

Maskwell calls out at *Saygrace's* Door, Mr.
Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace.

The other answers, Sweet Sir, I will but
Pen

Pen the last Line of an Acrostick, and be with you in the twinkling of an Ejaculation, in the Pronouncing of an Amen, &c.

Mask. Nay good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time, &c.

Saygrace. You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a Sermon, to do you Pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater — except — the business in Hand — have you provided a Habit for Mellifont?

Saygr. I have, &c.

Mask. Have you stich'd the Gown-sleeve, that he may be puzzled and waste time in putting it on?

Saygr. I have; the Gown will not be indued without Perplexity. There is a little more profane, and abusive Stuff behind, but let that pass.

The Author of *Don Sebastian* strikes at the Bishops through the sides of the Mufti, and borrows the Name of the Turk to make the *Christian* ridiculous. He knows the transition from one Religion to the other is natural, the Application easy, and the Audience but too well prepar'd. And should they be at a loss, he has elsewhere given them a Key to understand him.

For Priests of all Religions are the same.

*Absol. and
Act.*

H 4

How-

The Clergy Abused

However that the Sense may be perfectly intelligible, he makes the Invective General, changes the Language, and rails in the Style of Christendom.

Benducar speaks,

— *Church-men tho' they itch to govern all,
Are silly, woful, aukward Politicians :
They make lame Mischief tho' they mean well.*

So much the better, for 'tis a sign they are not beaten to the Trade. The next Lines are an Illustration taken from a *Taylor*.

*Their Int'rest is not finely drawn and hid,
But Seams are coarsly bungled up and seen.*

*This Benducar was a rare Spokesman
for a first Minister ; and would have fitted
John of Leyden most exactly ?*

In the Fourth *Act*, the *Mufti* is *Depos'd* and *Captain Tom* reads him a shrewd Lecture at parting. But let that pass.

To go on, *Mustapha* threatens his great Patriarch to put him to the Rack. Now you shall hear what an answer of Fortitude and Discretion is made for the *Mufti*.

*Mufti. I hope you will not be so barbarous
to torture me. We may preach Suffering to
others, but alas holy Flesh is too well pamper'd*

to endure Martyrdom. By the way, if flinching from Suffering be a proof of *Holy Flesh*, the Poet is much a Saint in his Constitution, witness his *Dedication of King Arthur*.

In *Cleomenes*, Cassandra rails against Religion at the Altar, and in the midst of a Publick Solemnity.

Accurs'd be thou, Grass-eating fodder'd God! p. 32.
Accurs'd thy Temple ! More accurs'd thy Priests !

She goes on in a mighty Huff, and charges the Gods and Priesthood with Confederacy, and Imposture. This Rant is very unlikely at *Alexandria*. No People are more bigotted in their Superstition than the *Ægyptians*; Nor any more resenting of such an Affront. This Satyr then must be strangely out of Fashion, and Probability. No matter for that; it may work by way of Inference, and be serviceable at Home. And 'tis a handsom Complement to Libertines and Atheists.

We have much such another swaggering against Priests in *Oedipus*.

*Why seek I Truth from thee ?
The smiles of Courtiers and the Harlots teart,
The Tradesmens Oaths, and Mourning of an Heir,*

Are

The Clergy Abused

*Are Truths to what Priests tell,
O why has Priesthood privilege to Lye,
And you to be believ'd!*

And since they are thus Lively, I have
one Word or two to say to the Play.

When *Ageon* brought the News of King
Polybus's Death, *Oedipus* was wonderfully
surpriz'd at the Relation.

O all ye Powers is't possible? What, Dead!

And why not? Was the Man invulne-
rable or immortal? Nothing of that: He
was only Fourscore and Ten Years old, that
was his main Security. And if you will
believe the Poet, he

Ibid.

*Fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long,
Ev'n wondred at because dropt no sooner.*

And which is more, *Oedipus* must be ac-
quainted with his Age, having spent the
greatest part of his Time with him at *Co-*
rinth. So that in short, the pith of the
Story lies in this Circumstance. A Prince
of Ninety Years was dead, and one who
was wondred at for dying no sooner. And
now why so much Exclamation upon this
Occasion? Why must all the Powers in
Being, be summon'd in to make the News
Cre-

Credible? This Posse of *Interjections* would have been more seasonably raised, if the Man had been alive; for that by the Poet's Confession had been much the stranger Thing. However *Oedipus* is almost out of his Wits about the Matter, and is urgent for an account of Particulars.

That so the Tempest of my Joys may rise *Ibid.*
By just Degrees, and hit at last the Stars.

This is an empty ill proportion'd Rant, and without warrant in Nature or Antiquity. Sophocles does not represent *Oedipus* in such Raptures of extravagant Surprise. In the next Page, there's another Flight about *Polybus* his Death, somewhat like this. It begins with a *Noverint Universi*. You would think *Oedipus* was going to make a *Bond*.

Know, be it known to the Limits of the World;

This is scarce Sense, be it known.

Yet farther, let it pass you dazzling roof,
The Mansion of the Gods, and strike them deaf
With Everlasting peals of Thundring joy.

This Fustian puts me in mind of a Complet of Taylor's the Water-Poet, which for

The Clergy Abused

the Beauty of the Thought are not very unlike.

*What if a Humble-Bee should chance to strike,
With the But-End of an Antartick Pole.*

I grant Mr. Dryden clears himself of this *Act* in his *Vindication of the Duke of Guise*. But then why did he let these crude Fancies pass uncorrected in his Friend? Such fluttering ungovern'd Transports, are fitter for a Boy's *Declamation* than a *Tragedy*. But I shall trouble myself no farther with this *Play*. To return therefore to the Argument in hand. In the *Provok'd Wife* Sir John Brute puts on the Habit of a Clergy-man; counterfeits himself Drunk; quarrels with the Constable; and is knock'd down and seiz'd. He rails, swears, curses, is lewd and profane, to all the Heights of Madness and Debauchery: The Officers and Justice break Jests upon him, and make him a sort of Representative of this Order.

*Provok'd
Wife, p.
45, 46, 51,
52.*

This is rare Protestant Diversion, and very much for the Credit of the *Reformation*! The Church of England, I mean the Men of Her, is the only Communion in the World, that will endure such Infamies as these: The *Relapse* is, if possible, more singularly abusive. But the Chaplain wishes

wishes the Married couple Joy, in Lan- ^{Relapse, p.} guage horribly Smutty and Profane. To ^{p. 74} transcribe it would blot the Paper too much. In the next Page, *Young Fashion* desires *Bull* to make haste to Sir Tunbelly. He answers very decently, *I fly my good Lord.* At the end of this *Act*, *Bull* speaks ^{p. 75.} to the Case of Bigamy, and determines it thus. *I do confess to take two Husbands for the Satisfaction of---is to commit the Sin of Exorbitancy, but to do it for the peace of the Spirit, is no more than to be Drunk by way of Physick; besides, to prevent a Parent's wrath is to avoid the Sin of Disobedience, for when the Parent is Angry, the Child is forward:* The Conclusion is insolently Profane, and let it lie: The Spirit of this thought is borrow'd from Ben Johnson's *Bartholemen Fair*; only the Profaneness is mightily improved, and the Abuse thrown off the *Meeting-House*, upon the *Church*. The Wit of the *Parents* being angry, and the *Child* forward, ^{p. 86.} is all his own. *Bull* has more of this heavy Stuff upon his Hand. He tells *Young Fashion*, *your Worship's goodness is unspeakable, yet there is one thing seems a point of Conscience; And Conscience is a ten-* ^{p. 97} *der Babe, &c.*

These Poets I observe when they grow lazy, and are inclined to Nonsense, they commonly get a Clergy-man to speak it. Thus

The Clergy Abus'd

Thus they pass their own Dulness for Humour, and gratifie their Ease, and their Malice at once. Coupler instructs Young Fashion which way Bell was to be managed. He tells him as Chaplains go now, he must be brib'd high, He wants Money, Preferment, Wine, and a Whore. Let this be procured for him, and I'll warrant thee he speaks Truth like an Oracle.

p. 89.

A few Lines forward, the Rudeness is still more gross, and dash'd with Slut, the common Play-House Ingredient. 'Tis not long before Coupler falls into his old Civilities. He tells Young Fashion, Last Night the Devil run away with the Parson of Fatgoose Living. Afterwards Bell is plentifully railld on in downright Billings-gate; made to appear Silly, Servile, and Profane; and treated both in Posture and Language, with the utmost Contempt.

p. 94.

p. 95, 97,
105.

I could cite more Plays to this purpose; But these are sufficient to shew the Temper of the Stage,

Thus we see how hearty these People are in their Ill Will! How they attack Religion under every Form, and pursue the Priesthood through all the Subdivisions of Opinion. Neither Jews nor Heathens, Turks nor Christians, Rome nor Geneva, Church nor Conventicle, can escape

scape them. They are afraid, lest Virtue should have any Quarters undisturbed, Conscience any Corner to retire to, or God be Worshipped in any Place. 'Tis true, their Force seldom carries up to their Malice : They are too eager in the Combat to be happy in the Execution. The Abuse is often both gross and clumsy, and the Wit as wretched as the Manners. Nay, Talking won't always satisfy them : They must ridicule the Habit, as well as the Function of the Clergy. 'Tis not enough for them to play the Fool, unless they do it in *Pontificibus*. The Farce must be play'd in a Religious Figure, and under the Distinctions of their Office ! Thus the Abuse strikes strong upon the Sense ; The contempt is better spread, and the little Idea is apt to return upon the same Appearance. +

And now, does this Rudeness go upon any Authorities ? Was the Priesthood always thought thus insignificant, and do the Ancient Poets paint it in this manner ? This Point shall be tried, I shall run through the most considerable Authors, that the Reader may see how they treat the Argument. Homer stands highest upon the Roll, and is the first Poet both in Time, and Quality ; I shall therefore begin with him. 'Tis true he wrote no

Plays ;

+ See the Clergy more respectably exhibited in
the Court of Narbonne.
Lovers now, and, (I think) in *Lisel & Clarijn*.

Plays; but for Decency, Practice, and general Opinion, his Judgment may well be taken. Let us see then how the Priests are treated in his Poem, and what sort of Rank they hold,

Chryses, Apollo's Priest, appears at a Council of War with his Crown and gilt Scepter. He offers a valuable Ransom for his Daughter, and presses his Relation to *Apollo*. All the Army excepting *Agamemnon* are willing to consider his Character, and comply with his Proposals. But this General refuses to part with the Lady, and sends away her Father with disrespect. *Apollo* thought himself affronted with this Usage, and Revenges the Indignity in a Plague.

Hom. II.

ap. 3. &
dein Ed.
Scruvel.

"Οὐερέος οὐκέτι τίμησεν αὔγειας
Ἄτρωπος.

Il. B p. 91.

Adrastus and *Amphius* the Sons of Me-

Ibid. p. 92. rops a Prophet, commanded a considerable

extent of Country in *Troas*, and brought a

Body of Men to King *Priam*'s Assistance.

354. 155. And *Ennomus* the Augur commanded the Troops of *Mysia* for the Besieged.

Phegeus and *Idaeus* were the Sons of *Dares* the Priest of *Vulcan*. They appear in an Equipage of Quality, and charge *Diomedes* the third Hero in the Grecian Army

Army. *Ideas after the Misfortune of the Combat, is brought off by Vulcan.* Dolon ^{ib. p. 154,}
pion was Priest to Scamander, and regarded ^{155.}
like the God he belong'd to,

Odys. 2. Sc. viii. Finis.

^{ib. p. 158,}

Ulysses in his return from Troy, took Itharus by Storm, and makes Prize of the whole Town, excepting Maron and his Family. This Maron was Apollo's Priest, and preserv'd out of respect to his Function: He presents *Ulysses* nobly in Gold, Plate, and Wine; And this Hero makes an honourable mention of him, both as to his Quality, and way of Living.

These are all the Priests I find mentioned in *Homer*, and we see how fairly the Poet treats them, and what sort of Figure they made in the World.

To the Testimony of *Homer*, I shall joyn that of *Virgil*, who tho' he follows at a great distance of Time, was an Author of the first Rank, and wrote the same kind of Poetry with the other. Now *Virgil*, tho' he is very extraordinary in his Genius, in the Compsals of his Learning, in the Musick and Majesty of his Stile; yet the exactness of his Judgment seems to be his peculiar, and most distinguishing Talent. He had the truest

Relish imaginable, and always described Things according to *Nature, Custom, and Decency*. He wrote with the greatest Command of *Temper*, and *Superiority* of good *Sense*. He is never lost in Smoak and Rapture, nor overborn with Poetick Fury ; but keeps his Fancy warm and his Reason cool at the same time. Now this great Master of Propriety never mentions any *Priests* without some *Marks of Advantage*. To give some Instances as they lie in Order.

When the *Trojans* were consulting what was to be done with the *Wooden-Horse*, and some were for lodging it within the Walls : *Laocoön* appears against this Opinion, at the head of a numerous Party ; harangues with a great deal of Sense, and Resolution ; and examines the *Machine* with his Lance. In fine, He advised so well, and went so far in the Discovery of the Stratagem ; that if the *Trojans* had not been ungovernable, and as it were *Aeneid.* 2. stupified by Fate and Folly, he had saved the Town.

Trojaque nunc stares, Priamique arx ultra maneres.

This *Laocoön* was *Neptune's Priest*, and either Son to *Priam*, or Brother to *Aeneas*.

ches, who was of the Royal Family. The next we meet with, is *Pantheus*, Apollo's Priest. He is called *Pantheus Oryades*, which is an Argument his Father was well known. His Acquaintance with *Aeneas*, to whose House he was carrying his little Grandson, argues him to be a Person of Condition. *Pantheus* after a short Relation of the Posture of Affairs, joins *Aeneas*'s little Handful of Men, Charges in with him when the Town was seiz'd, and fired, and at last dies handomely in the Action.

*Ruans in
Loc.*

Eneid. 2.

Ibid.

The next is *Anius King of Delos*, Prince and Priest in one Person.

*Rex Anius, Rex idem hominum Phabitque
Sacerdos.*

Eneid. 3.

When *Aeneas* was outed at *Troy*, and in quest of a new Country, he came to an Anchor at *Delos*, *Anius* meets him in a Religious Habit, receives him civilly, and obliges him with his Oracle. In the Book now mention'd, we have another of Apollo's Priests, his Name is *Helenus*, Son of *Priam* and King of *Cherson*. He entertains *Aeneas* with a great deal of Friendship, and Magnificence, gives him many material Directions, and makes him a rich Present at parting. To this Prince, if you

Ibid.

please, we may joyn a Princeſ of the ſame Profefſion; and that is *Rhea Sylyria*, Daughter to *Numitor* King of *Alba*, and Mother to *Romulus*, and *Rimus*. This Lady *Virgil* calls —— *Regina Sacerdotum*, a Royal Priſteſ. Farther: When *Aeneas* made a Viſit upon Buſineſſ to the *Shades below*, He had for his Guide, the famous *Sibylla Cumæa*, who belong'd to *Apollo*. When he came thither, amongſt the reſt of his Acquaintance, he ſaw *Polybates* a Priſt of *Ceres*. This *Polybates* is mention'd with the three Sons of *Antenor*, with *Glaucus*, and *Therſilocus*, who commanded in Chief in the *Trojan Auxiliaries*: So that you may know his Quali ty by his Company. When *Aeneas* had paſſed on farther, he ſaw *Orpheus* in *Elysium*: The Poet calls him the *Thracian Priſt*. There needs not be much ſaid of *Orpheus*: He is famous for his Skill in Muſick, Poetry, and Religious Ceremonies: He was one of the Hero's of Antiquity, and a principal Adventurer in the Expedition of the *Golden Fleece*.

In the Seventh *Aeneid*, the Poet gives in a List of the Princes, and General Officers who came into the Aſſiſtance of *Tar-
nus*; Amongſt the reſt he tells you,

Aeneid.
ib.

En. 6.

Ibid.

Quin

*Quin & Marrubia venit de gente Sacerdotum
Archippi regis missu fortissimus Umbro.*

This Priest he commands both for his Courage and his Skill in Physick, Natural Magick, and Philosophy. He understood the Virtues of Plants, and could lay Passions and Poisons asleep. His Death was extremely regretted by his Country, who made a Pompous and Solemn Mourning for him.

*Te nemus Angitia vitrea, te Fucus, unda,
Te liquidi flevere lucis.* *Eneid. 7.*

The Potitii, and the Pinarii, mention'd *Eneid. 8.* were as Livy observes, chosen out of the first Quality of the Country, and had the Priesthood hereditary to their Family. To go on, Emonides, and Chlorenus make a glistering Figure in the Field, and are very remarkable for the Curiosity of their Armour, and Habit. *Emonides's Finery* is passed over in general.

Totus collucens veste atque insignibus armis. *Eneid 10.*

But the Equipage of Chlorenus is flourish'd out at length, and as I remember, admired by *Macrobius* as one of the Master-pieces.

Aeneid.

11.

Aeneid. 9,
10, 11.

pieces of *Virgil* in Description. In short, He is all Gold, Purple, Scarlet, and Embroidery ; and as rich as Nature, Art, and Rhetorick can make him. To these I might add *Rhamnes*, *Aglas*, and *Tolumnius*, who were all Persons of Condition, and had Considerable Posts in the Army.

It may be these last were not strictly Priests. Their Function was rather Prophetic. They interpreted the Resolutions of the Gods, by the voice of Birds, the Inspection of Sacrifices, and their Observations of Thunder. This made their Character counted Sacred, and their Relation to the Deity particular. And therefore the Romans ranged them in the Order of the Priests.

*Guthier.
de jure Ve-
ter. punif.*

Thus we see the admired *Homer*, and *Virgil*, always treat the Priests fairly, and describe them in Circumstances of Credit. If 'tis said, that the Instances I have given, are mostly in Names of Fiction, and in Persons who had no Being, unless in the Poet's fancy : I answer, I am not concern'd in the History of the Relation. Whether the Muster be true or false, 'tis all one to my purpose. This is certain, had the Priests been People of such slender Consideration as our Stage-Poets endeavour to make them ; they must have

ap-

appear'd in a different Figure ; or rather, have been left out as too little for that sort of Poem. But *Homer* and *Virgil* had other Sentiments of Matters : They were govern'd by the Reason of Things, and the common usage of the World : They knew the *Priesthood* a very reputable Employment, and always esteem'd as such. To have used the *Priests* ill, they must have call'd their own Discretion in question : They must have run into impropriety, and fallen foul upon Custom, Manners, and Religion. Now 'twas not their way to play the Knave and the Fool together : They had more Sense than to do a silly thing, only for the Satisfaction of doing an ill one.

I shall now go on, to enquire what the Greek *Tragedians* will afford us upon the present Subject. There are but two *Plays* in *Aeschylus*, where the *Ministers* of the Gods are represented. The one is in his *Eumenides*, and here *Apollo's Priestess* only opens the *Play*, and appears no more. The other is in his *Siege of Thebes*. In this Tragedy, the *Prophet Amphiaraus* is one of the Seven Commanders against the *Town*. He has the Character of a Modest, Brave Officer, and of one who rather affected to be great in Action, than Noise.

The Clergy Abused

In Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Jupiter's Priest has a short part. He appears at the Head of an Address, and delivers the Harangue by the King's Order. *Oedipus* in his Passion treats *Tiresias* ruggedly; *Tiresias* replies with Spirit and Freedom, and plainly tells him he was none of his Servant, but *Apollo*'s.

Oedip. Tyr. p. 148.

Ibid. 169. Οὐ μὴ τίσαι ζεῦ δύνατος λαλεῖν.

p. 38.

Antig. p. 259, 258.

And here we may observe that all *Oedipus* his reproaches relates to *Tiresias*'s person; there is no such Thing as a general Imputation upon his Function: But the English *Oedipus* makes the Priest-hood an Imposturous Profession; and rails at the whole Order. In the next Tragedy, *Creon* charges *Tiresias* with subornation; and that he intended to make a Penny of his Prince. The Priest holds up his Character, speaks to the ill Usage with an Air of gravity, calls the King Son, and foretells him his Misfortune.

To go on to *Euripides*, for Sophocles has nothing more. This Poet in his *Phoenissa* brings in *Tiresias* with a very unacceptable report from the Oracle. He tells *Creon* that either his Son must die, or the City be lost: *Creon* keeps himself within Temper, and gives no ill Language. And even when

when *Menelaus* had kill'd himself, he *Eurip.*
neither complains of the Gods, nor re- *Phoeniss. p.*
proaches the *Prophet*. *158, 159.*

In his *Bacch.*, *Tiresias* is honourably used by *Cadmus*; and *Pentheus* who threatened him, is afterwards Punish'd for his Impiety. In another Play, *Apollo's Priestess* comes in upon a creditable account, and is respectfully Treated. *Iphigenia Agamemnon's Daughter* is made Priestess to *Diana*; and her Father thought himself happy in her Employment. These are all the *Priests* I Remember, represented in *Euripides*. To conclude the ancient Tragedians together: *Seneca* seems to follow the Conduct of *Euripides*, and secures *Tiresias* from being outraged. *Oedipus* carries it smoothly with him, and only desires him to put with the Oracle, and declare the Guilty Person. This *Tiresias* excuses, and afterwards the Heat of the ex-postulation falls upon *Creon*. *Calchas*, if not strictly a *Priest*, was an *Augur*, and had a Religious Relation. Upon this account, *Agamemnon* calls him *interpretes Deorum*; the Reporter of Fate, and the God's *Nuntio*; and gives him an honourable Character.

This Author is done; I shall therefore pass on to the *Comedians*. And here, *Aristophanes* is so declared an *Atheist*, that

Bacch.
Act. 1.
Act. 4.
3m. Act. 5.

Iphig. in
Act. 4. &
in Town,

Troad. 4.
2. p. 193.

I think him not worth the citing. Besides, he has but little upon the Argument: And where he does engage it, the Priests have every jot as good Quarter as the Gods.

Plut. Rom. Ayes. As for Terence, he neither represents any Priests, nor so much as mentions them.

Bacchid. Act. 2. 5. 3. Chrysalus in *Plautus* describes Theorimus Diana's Priest, as a Person of Quality, and Figure. In his *Rudens*, we have a Priestess upon the Stage, which is the only Instance in this Poet. She entertains the two Women who were wrecked, and is commended for her hospitable Temper. The Procurer *Labrax* swaggers that he will force the Temple, and begins the Attack.

Rud. A. 1. 5. A. 2. 3. Demades a Gentleman, is surprized at his Insolence, and threatens him with Revenge. The report of so bold an attempt made him cry out *Quis homo est tanta confidentia, qui Sacerdotem audeat violare?* It seems in those Days, 'twas very infamous to affront a Holy Character, and break in upon the Guards of Religion! Thus we see, how the Ancient Poets behaved themselves in the Argument. Priests seldom appear in their Plays. And when they come, 'tis Business of Credit that brings them. They are treated like Persons of Condition. They Act up to their Relation; neither sneak, nor prevaricate, nor do any thing unbecoming their Office.

And

And now a word or two of the Moderns.

The famous *Cornille* and *Moliere*, bring no Priest of any kind upon the Stage. The former leaves out *Tiresias* in his *Oedipus*: tho' this Omission baulks his thought, and maims the Play. What therefore but regard to Religion could keep him from the use of this Liberty? As I am inform'd the same reservedness is practised in *Spain*, and *Italy*; And that there is no Theatre in *Europe*, excepting the *English*, that entertains the Audience with Priests.

This is certainly the right Method, and best secures the Out-works of Piety. The Holy Function is much too Solemn to be play'd with. Christianity is for no Fooling; Neither the Place, the Occasion, nor the Actors are fit for such a Representation. To bring the *Church* into the *Play-House*, is the way to bring the *Play-House* into the *Church*. 'Tis apt to turn Religion into Romance; and make unthinking People conclude, that all Serious Matters are nothing but *Fair*, *Fiction*, and *Design*. 'Tis true, the *Tragedies* at *Athens* were a sort of *Homilies*, and design'd for the Instruction of the People. To this purpose, they are all Clean, Solemn, and Sententious; Play-
Rud. A. 4.
s. 7.
s. likewise informs us that the *Comedians* used to teach the People Morality. The
case

The Clergy Shamed

case standing thus, 'tis less surprising to find the *Priests* sometimes appear. The Play had grave Argument, and Pagan Indulgence, to plead in it's behalf. But our Poets steer by another Compass: Their Aim is to *destroy Religion*, their *preaching* is against *Sermons*; and their Business, but Diversions at the best. In short, Let the Character be never so well managed, no Christian Priest (especially) ought to come upon the Stage. For where the Business is an Abuse, and the Place a Profanation, the demurenels of the Manner, is but a poor excuse. Monsieur Racine is an Exception to what I have observ'd in France. In his *Athalie*, *Zaida* the High-Priest has a large part. But, then the Poet does him Justice in his Station; he makes him Honest and Brave, and gives him a shining Character throughout. *Mathan* is another Priest in the same Tragedy. He turns Renegado, and revolts from God to *Baal*. He is a very ill Man, but makes a considerable Appearance, and is one of the Top of *Athalie*'s Faction. And as for the *Blemishes* of his Life, they all stick upon his own Honour, and reach no farther than his Person: In fine, the Play is a very Religious Poem; 'Tis upon the Matter, all *Sermon* and *Anthem*. And if it were not design'd for the Theatre, I have nothing to Object.

Let

I do not see
this.

Let us now just look over our own Country-men, till King Charles the Second.

Shakespear takes the Freedom to represent the Clergy in several of his Plays. But for the most part, he holds up the Function, and makes them neither Act, nor Suffer any thing unhandsom. In one Play or two, he is much bolder with the Order,

* Sir Hugh Evans: a Priest is too Comical and Secular in his Humour. How ever he understands his Post; and converses with the Freedom of a Gentleman.

I grant in *Lover's Labour lost*, the Curate plays the Fool egregiously; and so does the Poet too; for the whole Play is a very silly one.

In the History of Sir John Oldcastle, Sir John Parson of Wrotham swears, games, wenches, pads, tilts, and drinks:

This is extremely bad, and like the Author of the *Relapse*, &c. Only with this Difference; Shakespear's Sir John has some Advantage in his Character.

He appears Loyal and Stout; He brings in Sir John

Action, and other Rebels Prisoners. He is rewarded by the King, and the Judge uses him Civilly and with Respect. In short, He

is represented Lewd, but not Little; And the Disgrace falls rather on the Person than the Office. But the *Relapser's* Busi-

ness, is to sink the Notion, and Murder the Character, and make the Fun-

ction

† So also in Twelfth night where the Doctor personates Sir Topaz: also Sir Oliver Martext in As you like it.

The Clergy Abused

ction despicable: So that upon the whole, Shakespear is by much the gentler. *Timon of Athens* is a good Play, but it is not so well written as *Twelfth Night*. Towards the end of the *Silene Woman*, Ben Jonson brings in a *Cheeseman*, and a *Civitian* into their *Habitation*: But then he premiseth a handsom *Exposure*, acquainteth the *Audience*, that these *Persons* are but *Borrow'd*, and throws in a *Sarcasm* for the Honour of either Profession: In the Third *Act*, we have another *Clergy-man*; He is abused by *Catbird*, and a little by *Mow-rose*. But his *Lady* checketh him for the ill Breeding of the Usage of her *Magnetical Lady*, *Tale of a Tub*, and *bad Shepherd*; there are *Priests* who manage but unowardly. But these Plays were his *Master-works*, which Mr. Dryden calls his *Dangereous*: This Author has no more *Priests*, and therefore we'll take leave of him.

Beaumont and *Fletcher* in the *Faithful Shepherdess*, *The False and A Wife for a Month*, and the *Knight of Malta*, give us both *Priests* and *Bishops*, part Heathen and part Christian: But all of them save their Reputation, and make a Creditable Appearance. The *Priest* in the *Scandalous Lady*, and *Spanish Curate* are ill used. The first is made a Fool, and the other a Knave: Indeed they seem to be brought in on purpose to make sport, and deserve Religion.

Essay of
Dramat.
C.

Religion, And such for Repentance

Thus we see the Englyssh Stage alwayes
been out of Order, but neijer in the Re-
gnes tis at present. I shall now take
Leave of the Reader, and touch a little upon History and Argu-
ment.

And here I shall briefly shew the Rights
the Clergy have to Regard, and fair Usage,
upon these Three following Accounts.

I. Because of their Relation to the Deity.

II. Because of the Importance of their Office.

III. They have prescription for their Privilege. Their Function has been in Possession of Esteem, in all Ages, and Countries.

I. Upon the Account of their Relation to the Deity, &c.

The Holy Order is appropriated to the Divine Worship. And a Priest has the peculiar Honour to belong to nothing less than God Almighty. Now the Greatness of the Service alway riseth in proportion ad the Quality and Greatness of the Masters. And for this Reason, 'tis more Honourable to serve a Prince, than a private Person. To apply this, Christian Priests are this Principal Ministers of God's Kingdom:

They

They represent his Person, publish his Laws, pass his Pardons, and preside in his Worship. To expose a Priest, much more to burlesque his Function, is an Affront to the Deity. All Indignities done to Ambassadors, are interpreted upon their Masters and Reveng'd as such. To outrage the Ministers of Religion, is in effect to deny the Being, or Providence of God; and to treat the *Bible* like a *Romance*: As much as to say, the Stories of another World are nothing but a little *Priestcraft*; and therefore I am resolved to lash the Profession. But to droll upon the Institution of God; to make his Ministers cheap, and his Authority contemptible; to do this is little less than open Defiance. 'Tis a sort of Challenge to awaken his Vengeance, to exert his Omnipotence, and do Right to his Honour. If the Profession of a Courtier was unfashionable, a Prince's *Commission* thought a Scandal, and the *Magistracy* laugh'd at for their Business; the Monarch had need look to himself in time: He may conclude, his Person is despis'd, his Authority but a Jeft, and the People ready either to change their Master, or to set up for themselves Government and Religion, no less than *Trade* sublis't upon Reputation. 'Tis true God can't be Depos'd, neither does his

his Happiness depend upon Homage. But since he does not Govern by Omnipotence, since he leaves Men to their Liberty, Acknowledgment must sink, and Obedience decline, in proportion to the Lessenings of Authority. How provoking an Indignity of this kind must be, is easie to imagine.

II. The Functions and Authorities of Religion have great Influence on Society. The Interest of this Life lies very much in the Belief of another. So that if our Hopes were bounded with *Sight* and *Sense*, if *Eternity* was out of the Case, General Advantage, and Publick Reason, and Secular Policy, would oblige us to be just to the *Priesthood*. For *Priests*, and Religion always stand and fall together; Now Religion is the Basis of Government, and Man is a wretched Companion without it. When Conscience takes its Leave, Good Faith, and Good Nature go with it. *Atheism* is all Self, Mean and Mercenary. The *Atheist* has no *Henceafter*, and therefore will be sure to make the most of this World. Interest, and Pleasure are the Gods he Worships, and to these he'll Sacrifice every Thing else.

III. The *Priest-hood* ought to be fairly treated, because it has Prescription for this Privilege. This is so evident a Truth, that there is hardly any Age or Country,

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but

The Clergy Abused

but affords sufficient Proof. A just Discourse upon this Subject would be a large Book, but I shall just skim it over and pass on. And

1st. For the Jews. *Josephus* tells us, the Line of *Aaron* made some of the best Pedigrees, and that the *Priests* were reckon'd among the Principal Nobility.

De Bell. Judaic.

Deut. 17.

9, 10.

2 Chron.

19, 8.

Math. 27.

Act. 4.

Vid. Selden de Synedr.

By the Old *Testament* we are inform'd that the *High-Priest* was the Second Person in the Kingdom. The Body of that *Order* had Civil Jurisdiction. And the *Priests* continued Part of the Magistracy in the time of our Saviour. *Jeboiada* the *High-Priest* was thought an Alliance big enough for the Royal Family. He Married the King's Daughter; His Interest and Authority was so great that he broke the Usurpation under *Athalia*; and was at the Head of the Restauration. And lastly the *Assamonean* Race were both Kings and Priests.

2 Chron.

22, 23.

Joseph.

To Proceed. The *Egyptian* Monarchy was one of the most antient and best-polish'd upon Record. Here Arts and Sciences, the Improvement of Reason, and the Splendor of Life had its first Rise. Hither 'twas that *Plato* and most of the Celebrated Philosophers travell'd for their Learning. Now in this Kingdom the *Priests* made no vulgar Figure. These with the

the Military Men were the Body of the Nobility, and Gentry. Besides the Business of Religion, the *Priests* were the Publick *Annalists*, and kept the Records of *History*, and *Government*. They were many of them bred in Courts, formed the Education of their Princes, and assisted at their Councils. When *Joseph* was Viceroy of *Ægypt*, and in all the height of his Pomp, and Power, the King Married him to the Daughter of *Potipherah*. *Priest of On*. The Text says *Pharaoh gave him her to Wife*. *Gen. 41*.

This shews the Match was deliberate Choice, and Royal Favour, no stooping of Quality, or Condescensions of Love, on *Joseph's* Side.

To pass on. The *Persian Magi*, and the *Druuids of Gaul* were of a Religious Profession, and consign'd to the Service of the Gods. Now all these were at the upper End of the Government, and had a great share of Regard and Authority. The Body of the *Indians*, as *Diodorus Siculus* re-^{porph. d.} ports, is divided into Seven Parts. The first is the *Clan of the Bramines*, the *Priests*, ^{Abstin} ^{Lib. 4. C. 6.} *far de Bell.* and Philosophers of that Country. This *Gall. Lib.* Division is the least in Number, but the first in Degree. Their Privileges are extraordinary. They are exempted from Taxes, and Live Independent of Authority. They are called to the Sacrifices,

The Clergy Abused

'and take care of Funerals; They are look'd
 'on as the Favourites of the Gods, and
 'thought skilful in the Doctrins of another
 'Life: And upon these Accounts are large-
 'ly consider'd in Presents, and Acknow-
 'ledgement. The Priestesses of Argos were
 so Considerable, that Time is dated from
 them, and they stand for a Reign in Chro-
 nology. The Brave Romans are commend-
 ed by *Polybius* for their Devotion to the
 Gods; Indeed they gave great Proof of
 their being in earnest; For when their
 Chief Magistrates, their Consuls them-
 selves, met any of the *Vestals*, they held
 down their *Fasces*, and stoop'd their *Sword*
 and *Mace* to Religion.

Lib. 6.

Sen. in
Controv.Dion. Ha-
lic.

The Priest-hood was for some time confin'd to the *Patrician* Order, that is, to the Upper Nobility. And afterwards the *Emperours* were generally *High-Priests* themselves. The *Romans* in distress endeavour'd to make Friends with *Coriolanus* whom they had banish'd before. To this purpose they furnish'd out several *Solemn Embassies*. Now the Regulation of the Ceremony, and the Remarks of the Historian, plainly discover that the *Body* of the *Priests* were thought not inferior to any other. One Testimony from *Tully* and I have done. 'Tis in his Harangue to the College of the *Priests*. *Cum multa divinitus,*

divinitus, Pontifices, à majoribus nostris inventa atque instituta sunt; tum nihil praeclarius quam quod vos eosdem &c. Religionibus Deorum immortalium, & summa Republica praesse voluerunt, &c. i.e. Amongst the many laudable Instances of our Ancestors Prudence, and Capacity, I know nothing better contrived than their placing your Order at the Helm, and setting the same Persons at the Head both of Religion and Government. Thus we see what Rank the Priesthood held among the Jews, and how Nature taught the Heathen to regard it. And is it not now posses'd of as fair pretences as formerly? Is Christianity any disadvantage to the Holy Office; And does the Dignity of a Religion lessen the Publick Administrations in't? The Priest of the most High God and of Idolatry, can't be compared without Injury. To argue for the Preference is a Reflection upon the Creed. 'Tis true, the Jewish Priest-hood was instituted by God: But every Thing Divine is not of Equal Consideration. Realities are more valuable than Types; And as the Apostle argues, the Order of Melchizedek is greater than that of Aaron. The Author, (I mean the immediate one,) the Authorities, the Busines, and the End, of the Christian Priest-hood, are more Noble than those of the Jewish. For is not Christ

Hebr. 7.

greater than *Moses*, *Heaven* better than the Land of *Canaan*, and the *Eucharist* to be prefer'd to all the *Sacrifices*, and *Expiations* of the *Law*? Thus the Right, and the Reason of things stands. And as for *Fact*, the Christian World have not been backward in their Acknowledgments. Ever since the first Conversion of Princes, the *Priesthood* has had no small share of Temporal Advantage. The *Codes*, *Novels*, and *Church-History*, are sufficient Evidence what Sense *Constantine* and his Successors had of these Matters. But I shall not detain the *Reader* in remote Instances.

To proceed then to Times and Countries more generally known. The People of *France* are branched into three Divisions, of these the *Clergy*, are the First. And in consequence of this Privilege, at the Assembly of the *States*, they are first admitted to *Harangue* before the King.

Mireus de Statu Relig. Christ. Ibid. Fletcher's Embass. Puffendorf Introducti. en. à l' H. Roire.

In *Hungary* the *Bishops* are very Considerable, and some of them great Officers of State. In *Poland* they are Senators, that is, part of the Upper Nobles. In *Muscovy* the *Bishops* have an Honourable Station; and the Present *Czar* is descended from the *Patriarchal* Line. I suppose I need say nothing of *Italy*. In *Spain* the *Sees* generally are better endow'd than else-where, and Wealth always draws Consideration.

The

The *Bishops* hold their Lands by a Military Noble Tenure, and are excused from Personal Attendance. And to come toward an end ; They are Earls and Dukes in *France*, and Sovereign Princes in *Germany*. In *England* the *Bishops* are Lords of Parliament : And the Law in plain Words distinguishes the Upper House into the Spiritual and Temporal Nobility. And several Statutes call the Bishops Nobles by direct Implication. To mention nothing more, their Heraldry is regulated by *Garter*, and Blazon'd by *Stones*, which none under the Nobility can pretend to. In this Country of ours, Persons of the First Quality have been in Orders : To give an Instance of some few. *Odo* Brother to *William* the Conqueror was *Bishop* of *Baieux*, and Earl of *Kent*. King *Stephen's* Brother was *Bishop* of *Winchester*. *Nevill* Arch-Bishop of *Tork* was Brother to the Great Earl of *Warwick*, and *Cardinal Pool* was of the Royal Family. To come a little lower, and to our own Times. And here we may reckon not a few Persons of Noble Descent in Holy Orders. Witness the *Berklyes*, *Comptons*, *Montagues*, *Crews*, and *Norths* ; The *Annesleys*, *Finches*, *Grahams*, &c. And as for the Gentry, there are not many good Families in *England*, but either have, or have had a *Clergy-man* in them.

*Heylin's.
Cosmog.*

25 Hen.

8 Cap.

22.

16 Hen. 8.

Cap. 2.

1 Edw.

6. Cap.

12, &c.

Preamb.

The Clergy Abused

In short ; The *Priesthood* is the Profession of a Gentleman. A Parson notwithstanding the ignorant Pride of some People, is a Name of Credit, and Authority, both in Religion, and Law. The *Addition* of *Clerk* is at least equal to that of Gentleman. Were it otherwise, the *Profession* would in many Cases be a kind of Punishment. But the *Law* is far from being so singular as to make *Orders* a Disadvantage to *Degree*. No, The Honour of the Family continues, and the *Heraldry* is every jot as safe in the *Church*, as 'twas in the *State*. And yet when the *Laity* are taken leave of, not Gentleman but *Clerk* is usually written. This Custom is an Argument the Change is not made for the worse, that the Spiritual Distinction is as valuable as the other ; And to speak Modestly, that the first *Addition* is not lost, but Cover'd. Did the Subject require it, this Point might be farther made good. For the stile of a higher Secular Honour is continued as well with *Priesthood* as without it. A Churchman who is either *Baronet*, or *Baron*, writes himself so, notwithstanding his *Clerksip*. Indeed we can't well imagine the Clergy degraded from Paternal Honour without a strange Reflection on the Country ; without supposing *Julian* at the

the Helm, the *Laws* Antichristian, and *Infidelity* in the very *Constitution*. To make the Ministers of Religion less upon the score of their Function, would be a Penalty on the *Gospel*, and a contempt of the God of Christianity. 'Tis our Saviour's reasoning; *He that despises you, despises Me, and he that despises Me, despises Him that sent Me.* ^{s. Luke 10.}

I hope what I have offer'd on this Subject will not be misunderstood. There is no Vanity in necessary Defence. To wipe off Aspersions, and rescue Things from Mistake, is but bare Justice: Besides, where the Honour of God, and the Publick Interest are concern'd, a Man is bound to speak. To argue from a resembling Instance. He that has the King's Commission ought to Maintain it. To let it suffer under Rudeness is to betray it. To be tame and silent in such Cases, is not Modesty but Meanness. Humility obliges no Man to desert his Trust; to throw up his Privilege, and prove false to his Character. And is our Saviour's Authority inferiour to that of Princes? Are the Kingdoms of this World more Glorious than that of the next? And can the Concerns of Time be greater than those of Eternity? If not, the reasoning above-mention'd must hold in the Application.

And

The Clergy Abused

And now by this time I conceive the ill
Manners of the *Stage* may be in some mea-
sure apparent; And that the *Clergy* deserve
none of that Coarse Usage which it puts
upon them. I confess I know no *Profess-*
on that has made a more creditable Figure,
that has better Customs for their Privileges,
and better Reasons to maintain them.
And here setting aside the Point of Conscience;
where lies the Decency of falling foul upon this *Order*? What Propriety is
there in Misrepresentation? In confounding
Respects, disguising Features, and
painting Things out of all Colour and
Complexion? This crossing upon Nature
and Reason, is great Ignorance, and out of
Rule. And now what Pleasure is there in
Misbehaviour and Abuse? Is it such an
Entertainment to see Religion worried by
Atheism, and Things the most Solemn and
Significant tumbled and tost by Buffoons?
A Man may laugh at a Puppy's tearing a
Wardrobe, but I think 'twere altogether
as Discreet to beat him off. Well! but
the Clergy mismanage sometimes, and
they must be told of their Faults. What
then? Are the *Poets* their *Ordinaries*?
Is the *Pulpit* under the Discipline of the
Stage? And are those fit to correct the
Church that are not fit to come into it?
Besides, what makes them fly out upon
the

the *Function*; and rail by wholesale? Is the *Priesthood* a Crime, and the Service of God a Disadvantage? I grant Persons and Things are not always suited. A good *Post* may be ill kept, but then the Centurie should keep close to the Fault, and the Office not suffer for the Manager. The *Clergy* may have their Failings sometimes like others, but what then? The *Character* is still untarnish'd. The *Men* may be Little, but the *Priests* are not so. And therefore like other People, they ought to be treated by their best Distinction.

If 'tis Objected that the *Clergy* in *Plays* are commonly *Chaplains*, And that these Belonging to Persons of Quality they were obliged to represent them servile and submissive. To this I Answer,

1st. In my former Remark, that the *Stage* often outrages the whole *Order*, without regard to any particular Office. But were it not so, in the

2d. Place, They quite overlook the *Character*, and mistake the Business of *Chaplains*. They are no *Servants*, neither do Moral Essays. they Belong to any *Body*, but God Almigh-
ty. This Point I have fully proved in another *Treatise*, and thither I refer the Reader.

C H A P. IV.

The Stage-Poets make their Principal Persons Vicious, and reward them at the End of the Play.

THE Lines of Virtue and Vice are Struck out by Nature in very Legible Distinctions ; They tend to a different Point, and in the greater Instances the Space between them is easily perceiv'd. Nothing can be more unlike than the Original Forms of these Qualities ; The First has all the Sweetness, Charms, and Graces imaginable ; The other has the Air of a Post ill Carved into a Monster, and looks both Foolish and Frightful together. These are the Native Appearances of Good and Evil : And they that endeavour to Blot the Distinctions to Rub out the Colours, or Change the Marks, are extremely to blame. 'Tis confessed as long as the Mind is awake, and Conscience goes true, there's no Fear of being imposed on. But when Vice is Varnish'd over with Pleasure, and comes in the Shape of Convenience, the Case grows somewhat dangerous ; for then the

the Fancy may be gain'd, and the Guards corrupted, and Reason suborn'd against it self. And thus a *Disguise* often passes when the Person would otherwise be stopt. To put *Lewdness* into a Thriving Condition, to give it an Equipage of Quality, and to treat it with Ceremony and Respect is the way to confound the Understanding, to fortifie the Charm, and to make the Mischief invincible. Innocence is often owing to Fear, and Appetite is kept under by Shame ; But when these Restraints are once taken off, when Profit and Liberty lie on the same side, and a Man can Debauch himself into Credit, what can be expected in such a Case, but that Pleasure should grow absolute, and Madness carry all before it ? The Stage seems eager to bring Matters to this Issue ; They have made a considerable Progress, and are still pushing their Point with all the Vigour imaginable. If this be not their Aim why is *Lewdness* so much consider'd in *Character* and *Success*? Why are their Favourites Atheistical, and their fine Gentlemen debauched ? To what purpose is *Vice* thus prefer'd, thus ornamented, and carress'd, unless for Imitation ? That Matter of Fact stands thus, I shall make good by several Instances. To begin then with their Men of Breeding and Figure.

Figure. *Wild-Blood* sets up for *Debauchery*, Ridicules Marriage, and Swears by

Mock A-frol. p. 3. *Mahomet*. *Bellamy* makes sport with the
etc.

Mock A-frol. p. 57. *Lorenzo* is vicious and calls
his Father *Bawdy Magistrate*. *Horner* is

59. *Spaniard Fryar* p. 61. horridly Smutty, and *Harcourt* false to his
Friend who used him kindly. In the

Plain Dealer Freeman talks coarsly, Cheats
the Widow, Debauches her Son, and

Old Batch Double. makes him undutiful. *Bellmour* is Lewd
and Profane, and *Mellefont* puts *Careless*

34. in the best way he can to *Debauch Lady Plyant*. These Sparks generally Marry
the Top-Ladies, and those that do not, are

brought to no Penance, but go off with
the Character of Fine Gentlemen: In
Don Sebastian, *Antonio* an Atheistical Bul-
ly is rewarded with the Lady *Moraima*,
and half the *Mufti's Estate*. *Valentine* in

Love for Love p. 90. *Love for Love* is (if I may so call him) the
Hero of the Play; this Spark the Poet

would pass for a Person of Virtue, but he
speaks too late. 'Tis true, He was hearty
in his Affection to *Angelica*. Now with-
out Question, to be in Love with a fine
Lady of Thirty Thousand Pounds is a
great Virtue! But then abating this single
Commendation, *Valentine* is altogether

Love for Love p. 6, 7, 25, 61, 89, 91. compounded of Vice. He is a prodigal De-
bauchee, Unnatural and Profane, Obscene,
Sawcy, and Undutiful; And yet this Li-
bertine

bertine is crown'd for the Man of Merit, has his Wishes thrown into his Lap, and makes the Happy *Exit*. I perceive we should have a rare Set of *Virtues* if these Poets had the making of them! How they hug a Vicious Character, and how profuse are they in their Liberalities to Lewdness? In the *Provok'd Wife Constant* Swears at Length, solicits Lady Brute, Confesses himself Lewd, and prefers Debauchery to Marriage. He handles the last Subject very notably and worth the Hearing. There is (says he) a poor sordid Slavery in Marriage, that turns the flowing Tide of Honour, and sinks it to the lowest ebb of Infamy. 'Tis a Corrupted Soil, Ill Nature, Avarice, Sloath, Cowardise, and Dirt, are all its Product-----But then Constancy (alias Whoring) is a Brave, Free, Haughty, Generous Agent. This is admirable stuff both for the Rhetorick and the Reason! The Character of Young *Fashion* in the *Relapse* is of the same Stauchness, but this the Reader may have in another Place.

To sum up the Evidence. A fine Gentleman, is a fine Whoring, Swearing, Smutty, Atheistical Man. These Qualifications it seems compleat the Idea of Honour. They are the Top-Improvements of Fortune, and the distinguishing Glories of Birth and Breeding! This is the

the Stage-Test for Quality, and those that can't stand it, ought to be Disclaim'd. The Restraints of Conscience and the Pedantry of Virtue, are unbecoming a Cavalier: Future Securities, and Reaching beyond Life, are vulgar Provisions: If he falls a-Thinking at this rate, he forfeits his Honour; For his Head was only made to run against a Post! Here you have a Man of Breeding and Figure, that burlesques the *Bible*, Swears, and talks Smut to Ladies, speaks ill of his Friend behind his Back, and betrays his Interest. A fine Gentleman that has neither Honesty, nor Honour, Conscience, nor Manners, Good Nature, nor civil Hypocrisie: Fine, only in the Insignificancy of Life, the Abuse of Religion, and the Scandals of Conversation. These Worshipful Things are the *Post's* Favourites: They appear at the Head of the *Fashion*; and shine in Character, and Equipage. If there is any Sense stirring, They must have it, tho' the rest of the Stage suffer never so much by the Partiality. And what can be the Meaning of this wretched Distribution of Honour? Is it not to give Credit and Countenance to Vice, and to shame young People out of all Pretences to Conscience, and Regularity? They seem forc'd to turn Lewd in their own Defence: They can't otherwise

wise justify themselves to the Fashion, nor keep up the Character of Gentlemen: Thus People not well furnish'd with Thought, and Experience, are debauch'd both in Practice and Principle. And thus Religion grows uncreditable, and passes for ill Education. The Stage seldom gives Quarter to any Thing that's serviceable or Significant; but persecutes Worth, and Goodness under every Appearance. He that would be safe from their Satyr must take care to disguise himself in Vice, and hang out the Colours of Debauchery. How often is Learning, Industry, and Frugality, ridiculed in Comedy? The rich Citizens are often Misers, and Cuckolds, and the Universities, Schools of Pedantry upon this Score. In short; Libertinism and Profaneness, Dressing, Idleness, and Gallantry, are the only valuable Qualities. As if People were not apt enough of themselves to be Lazy, Lewd and Extravagant, unless they were prick'd forward, and provok'd by Glory, and Reputation. Thus the Marks of Honour, and Infamy are misapplyed, and the Idea's of Virtue and Vice confounded. Thus Monstrousness goes for Proportion, and the Blemishes of Human Nature, make up the Beauties of it.

See the Character of Charles in the School for Scandal, with his speech about The pretty woman; and Sir Peter's about a Joseph.
Act 4. S.

Immorality Encouraged

The fine Ladies are of the same Cut with the Gentlemen; *Moraine* is Scandalously rude to her Father, helps him to a beating, and runs away with *Antonia*. *Angelice* talks fawcily to her Uncle, and *Rosalinda* confesses her Inclination for a Gallant. And as I have observ'd already, the Toping Ladies in the Mock Astrologer, *Sparago Fryar*, Country Wife, Old Batchelour, Orphan, Double Dealer, and Love Triumphant, are Smutty, and sometimes Profane.

And was Licentiousness and Irreligion, always a Mark of Honour? No; I don't perceive but that the old Poets had an other Notion of Accomplishment, and bred their People of Condition a different way. *Philolaches* in *Plautus* laments his being debauch'd; and dilates upon the Advantages of Virtue, and Regularity. *Lusitales* another Young Gentleman disputes handsomly by himself against Lewdness. And the Discourse between him and *Philetus* is Moral, and well managed. And afterwards he lashes Luxury and Debauching with a great deal of Warmth, and Satyr. *Chremes* in *Terence* is a modest young Gentleman, he is afraid of being surpriz'd by *Thebas*, and seemscarful not to sully his Reputation. And *Pamphilus* in *Hecyra* resolves rather to be govern'd by Duty, than Inclination.

Dan Sobeit.
*Love for
Love* p. 20.
*Person'd
Wife* p. 64.
*Chap. 1.
& 2.*

Mofet.
A. 1. 2.

Trinum.
A. 2. 1.

A. 2. 2.

Enuch.
A. 3. 3.

Hecyra.
A. 3. 4.

Plan.

Malcolm in *Macbeth* A. 4. S. 3 speaks of his continence. This I have heard laugh'd at by the audience.

Plautus's *Pinnaeum* tells her Friend *Panegyris*, that they ought to acquit themselves fairly to their Husbands, tho' These should fail in their Regards towards them. For all good People will do Justice tho' they don't receive it: *Lady Brize* in the ^{Stich. A.} *Provok'd Wife* is govern'd by different Maxims. She is debauch'd with ill Usage, says *Virtue is an Abs.*, and a Gallant's worth ^{P. 3.} forty m't. *Pinnaeum* goes on to another Head of Duty, and declares that a Daughter can never respect her Father too much, and that Disobedience has a great deal of Scandal, and Lewdness in't. The *Lady Jacinta* as I remember does not treat her Father at this rate of Decency. Let us bear a little of her Behaviour. The *Mock Astrologer* makes the Men draw, and frights the Ladies with the Apprehension of a Quarrel. Upon this, *Theodosia* crys what will become of us! *Jacinta* answers, we'll die for Company: nothing vexes me but that I am not a Man, to have one thrust at that malicious old Father of mine, before I go: ^{P. 60.} Afterwards the old Gentleman *Alonzo* threaten's his Daughters with a Nunnery *Jacinta* spars again and says, I would have thee to know thou graceless old Man, that I defy a Nunnery: name a Nunnery once more and I disown thee for my Father. I could carry on the Comparison between the old ^{Ibid.}

and Modern Poets somewhat farther. But this may suffice.

Thus we see what a fine time Lewd People have on the English Stage. No Censure, no mark of Infamy, no Mortification must touch them. They keep their Honour untarnish'd, and carry off the Advantage of their Character. They are set up for the Standard of Behaviour, and the Masters of Ceremony and Sense. And at last that the Example may work the better, they generally make them Rich, and Happy, and reward them with their own Delires.

Mr. Dryden in the *Preface* to his *Mock-Astrologer*, confesses himself blamed for this Practice. *For making debauch'd Persons his Protagonists, or chief Persons of the Drama; And for making them happy in the Conclusion of the Play, against the Law of Comedy, which is to reward Virtue, and punish Vice.* To this Objection He makes a lame Defence. And answers

1st. *That he knows no such Law constantly observ'd in Comedy by the Ancient or Modern Poets.* What then? Poets are not always exactly in Rule. It may be a good Law tho' 'tis not constantly observ'd; some Laws are constantly broken, and yet ne're the worse for all that. He goes on, and pleads the Authorities of *Plautus*, and *Terence*.

Terent. I grant there are Instances of Favour to vicious young People in these Authors, but to this I reply

15. That those Poets had a greater compass of Liberty in their Religion. Debauchery did not lie under those Discouragements of Scandal, and Penalty, with them as it does with us. Unless therefore He can prove Heathenism, and Christianity the same, his Precedents will do him little service.

2ly. Horace who was as good a Judge of the Stage, as either of those Comedians, seems to be of another Opinion. He condemns the Obscenities of *Plautus*, and tells you, Men of Fortune and Quality in his time, would not endure immodest Satyrs. *De Art. Poet.* He continues, that Poets were formerly admired for the great Services they did. For teaching Matters relating to Religion, and Government; For refining the Manners, tempering the Passions, and improving the Understandings of Mankind. For making them more useful in Domestick Relations, and the publick Capacities of Life. *rid.* This is a demonstration that Vice was not the Inclination of the Muses in those Days; and that Horace believ'd the chief Business of a Poem was, to Instruct the Audience. He adds farther that the *Chorus* ought to turn upon the Argument of the Drama, and support the Design of the *Acts*. That

The
Chorus.

Immorality Encouraged

They ought to speak in Defence of Virtue, and Frugality, and shew a Regard to Religion. Now from the Rule of the *Chorus*, we may conclude his Judgment for the *Play*. For as he observes, there must be a Uniformity between the *Chorus* and the *Act's*: They must have the same View, and be all of a Piece. From hence 'tis plain that *Horace* would have no Immoral Characters have either Countenance or good Fortune, upon the Stage. If 'tis said the very mention of the *Chorus* shews the Directions were intended for Tragedy. To this,

I answer, That the Consequence is not good. For the use of a *Chorus* is not inconsistent with Comedy. The ancient Comedians had it. *Aristophanes* is an Instance. I know 'tis said the *Chorus* was left out in that they call the *New Comedy*. But I can't see the conclusiveness of this Assertion. For *Aristophanes* his *Plautus* is *New Comedy* with a *Chorus* in't. And Aristotle who lived after this Revolution of the Stage, mentions nothing of the Omission of the *Chorus*. He rather supposes its continuance by saying the *Chorus* was added by the Government long after the Invention of Comedy.

Vid. Schol.

Libr. de Possess. 5. 'Tis true *Plautus* and *Terence* have none, but those before them probably might. *Moliere* has now reviv'd them; And

Chorus *Pytho.*

And *Horace* might be of his Opinion, for
ought we know to the contrary.

Lastly, *Horace* having expressly mentioned the beginning and progress of Comedy, discovers himself more fully: He advises a Poet to form his Work upon the Precepts of *Socrates* and *Plato*, and the Models of Moral Philosophy. This was the way to preserve Decency, and to assign a proper Fate and Behaviour to every Character. Now if *Horace* would have his Poet govern'd by the Maxims of Morality, he must oblige him to Sobriety of Conduct, and a just distribution of Rewards, and Punishments.

ibid.

Mr. Dryden makes Homewards, and endeavours to fortifie himself in Modern Authority. He lets us know that Ben Johnson after whom he may be proud to Err, gives him more than one Example of this Conduct; That in the Alchimist is notorious, where neither Face nor his Master are corrected according to their Demerits. But how Proud soever Mr. Dryden may be of an Error, he has not so much of Ben Johnson's company as he pretends. His Instance of Face, &c. In the Alchimist is rather notorious against his Purpose than for it.

Pref. Mock.
Astrol.

For Face did not Counsel his Master Lovenit to debauch the Widow; neither

is it clear that the Matter went thus far. He might gain her consent upon Terms of Honour for ought appears to the contrary. 'Tis true, Face who was one of the Principal Cheats is Pardon'd and Consider'd: But then his Master confesses himself kind to a Fault. He owns this Indulgence was a Breach of Justice, and unbecoming the Gravity of an old Man. And then desires the Audience to excuse him upon the Score of the Temptation. But Face continued in the Cousenage till the last without Repentance. Under Favour I conceive this is a Mistake. For does not Face make an *Apology* before he leaves the Stage? Does he not set himself at the Bar, arraign his own Practice, and cast the Cause upon the Clemency of the Company? And are not all these Signs of the Dislike of what he had done? Thus careful the Poet is to prevent the Ill Impressions of his *Play*! He brings both Man and Master to Confession. He dismisses them like Malefactors; And moves for their Pardon before he gives them their Discharge. But the *Mock-Astrologer* has a gentler Hand: *Wild-Blood* and *Jacinta* are more generously used: There is no Acknowledgment exacted; no Hardship put upon them: They are permitted to talk on in their Libertine way to the

the Last : and take Leave without the least Appearance of Reformation. The Mock-Astrologer urges Ben Johnson's *Silent Woman* as another Precedent to his Purpose. For there Dauphin confesses himself in Love with all the Collegiate Ladies. And yet this naughty Dauphin is Crowned in the End with the Possession of his Uncle's Estate, and with the Hopes of all his Mistresses. This Charge, as I take it, is somewhat too severe. I grant Dauphin Professes himself in Love with the Collegiate Ladies at first. But when they invited him to a private Visit, he makes them no Promise ; but rather appears tired, and willing to disengage. Dauphin therefore is not altogether so naughty as this Author represents him.

Ibid.

Ben Johnson's Fax is clearly against Mr. Dryden. And here I have his own Confession for Proof. He declares the Poet's End in this Play was the Punishment of Vice, and the Reward of Virtue. Ben was forced to strain for this piece of Justice, and break through the Unity of Design. This Mr. Dryden remarks upon him : However he is pleased to commend the Performance, and calls it an excellent Fifth Act.

*Effigie of
Drama-
tick Poetry.
p. 28.*

Ben Johnson shall speak for himself afterwards in the Character of a Critick ;

In

Immorality Encouraged

In the mean time I shall take a Testimony or two from *Shakespear*. And here we may observe the admir'd Falstaff goes off in Disappointment. He is thrown out of Favour as being a *Rake*, and dies like a Rat behind the Hangings. The Pleasure he had given, would not excuse him. The Poet was not so partial, as to let his Humour compound for his Lewdness. If 'tis objected that this Remark is wide of the Point, because *Falstaffe* is represented in Tragedy, where the Laws of Justice are more strictly observ'd. To this I answer, that you may call *Henry the Fourth* and *Fifth*, Tragedies if you please. But for all that, *Falstaffe* wears no *Bustion*, his Character is perfectly Comical from end to end.

The next Instance shall be in *Flowerdale the Prodigal*. This Spark notwithstanding his Extravagance, makes a lucky Hand on't at last, and marries a rich Lady. But then the Poet qualifies him for his good Fortune, and mends his Manners with his Circumstances. He makes him Repent, and leave off his Intemperance, Swearing, &c. And when his Father warn'd him against a Relapse, He answers very soberly,

The London Prodigal.

Heav'n helping me I'll hate the Course of Hell.

I could give some Instances of this kind out of Beaumont and Fletcher, But there's no need of any farther Quotation; For Mr. Dryden is hot satisfied with his Apology from Authority: He does as good as own that this may be construed no better than defending one ill Practice by another. To prevent this very reasonable Objection he endeavours to vindicate his Precedents from the Reason of the Thing. To this purpose he makes a wide difference between the Rules of Tragedy and Comedy. That Vice must be impartially prosecuted in the first, because the Persons are Great, &c.

It seems then Executions are only for Greatness and Quality. Justice is not to strike much lower than a Prince. Private People may do what they please. They are too few for Mischief, and too little for Punishment! This would be admirable Doctrine for Newgate, and give us a general Goal-Delivery without more ado. But in Tragedy (says the Mock-Astrologer.) The Crimes are likewise Horrid, so that there is a necessity for Severity and Example. And how stands the matter in Comedy? Quite otherwise. There the Faults are but the follies of Youth, and the Frailities of Human Nature. For Instance. There is nothing but a little Whoring, Pimping, Gaming, Profaneness, &c. And who could be so hard-hearted

to

to give a Man any Trouble for This ? Such Rigours would be strangely Inhumane ! A Poet is a better natur'd Thing I can assure you. These little Miscarriages move Pity and Commiseration, and are not such as must of necessity be Punish'd. This is comfortable Casuistry ! But to be Serious. Is Dissolution of Manners such a Peccadillo ? Does a Profligate Conscience deserve nothing but Commiseration ? And are People damn'd only for *Humane Frailties*? I perceive the Laws of Religion and those of the Stage differ extreamly ! The strength of his Defence lies in this choice Maxim, that the *Chief End of Comedy is Delight*. He questions whether *Instruction has anything to do in Comedy*; If it has, he is sure 'tis no more than it's secondary end : *For the busines of the Poet is to make you laugh.* Granting the Truth of this Principle, I somewhat question the Serviceableness of it. For is there no Diversion to be had unless Vice appears prosperous, and rides at the Head of Success? One would think such a preposterous distribution of Rewards, should rather shock the Reason, and raise the Indignation of the Audience. To laugh without Reason is the Pleasure of Fools, and against it, of something worse. The exposing of Knavery, and making *Lewdness* ridiculous, is a

Ibid.

Ibid.

much better occasion for Laughter. And this with submission I take to be the End of Comedy. And therefore it does not differ from Tragedy in the End, but in the Means. Instruction is the principal Design of both. The one works by Terror, the other by Infamy. 'Tis true, they don't move in the same Line, but they meet in the same Point at last. For this Opinion I have good Authority, besides what has been cited already.

15. Monsieur Rapin affirms, 'That Delight is the End that Poetry aims at, but not the Principal one. For Poetry being an Art, ought to be profitable by the quality of its own nature, and by the Essential Subordination that all Arts should have to Polity, whose End in General is the publick Good: This is the Judgment of Aristotle and of Horace his chief Interpreter. Ben Johnson in his Dedictory Epistle of his Fox has somewhat considerable upon this Argument; And declaims with a great deal of Zeal, Spirit, and good Sense, against the Licentiousness of the Stage. He lays it down for a Principle, ' That 'tis impossible to be a good Poet without being a good Man. That he (a good Poet) is said to be able to inform young Men to all good Discipline, and enflame grown Men to all great Virtues, &c.---- That the general complaint was that the Writers of those days had nothing

Rapin Re.
fes., &c.
p. 10.

Immorality encouraged

thing remaining in them of the Dignity
of a Poet, but the abused Name. That
now, especially in Stage-Poetry, nothing
but Ribaldry, Profanation, Blasphemy, all
Licence of Offence to God and Man, is
practised. He confesses a great part of
this Charge is over-true, and is sorry he
dares not deny it. But then he hopes all
are not embark'd in this bold Adventure
for Hell. For my part (says he) I can;
and from a most clear Conscience affirm;
That I have ever trembled to think to-
wards the least Profaneness, and loath'd
the Use of such foul, and unwash'd Baw-
dry, as is now made the Food of the Scene.
—— The encrease of which Lust in Liber-
ty, what Learned or Liberal Soul does not
abhor? In whole Enterludes nothing but
the Filth of the Time is utter'd---with
Brotheltry able to violate the Ear of a Pa-
gan, and Blasphemy, to turn the Blood of
a Christian to Water. He continues,
that the Insolence of these Men had
brought the Muses into Disgrace, and
made Poetry the lowest scorn of the Age.
He appeals to his Patrons the Universities,
that his Labour has been heretofore, and
mostly in this his latest Work, to reduce
not only the ancient Forms, but Manners
of the Scene, the Innocence, and the Do-
ctrine, which is the Principal End of Poe-
sy,

sy, to inform Men in the best Reasons of Living. Lastly he adds, 'that he has imitated the Conduct of the Antients in this Play, The goings out (or Conclusions) of whose Comedies, were not always joyful but oft-times the Bawds, the Slaves, the Rivals, yea, and the Masters are Muleded, and fitly, it being the Office of a Comick Poet (mark that!) to imitate Justice and Instruct to Life, &c. Say you so! Why then if Ben Johnson knew any thing of the Matter, Divertisement and Laughing is not as Mr. Dryden affirms, the Chief End of Comedy. This Testimony is so very full and clear, that it needs no explaining, nor any enforcement from Reasoning, and Consequence.

And because Laughing and Pleasure has such an unlimited Prerogative upon the Stage, I shall add a Citation or two from Aristotle concerning this Matter. Now this great Man, ' calls those Buffoons, and Impertinents, who rally without any regard to Persons or Things, to Decency or good Manners. That there is a great difference between Ribaldry, and honest Rallying. He that would perform exactly must keep within the Character of Virtue and Breeding. He goes on, and tells us that the old Comedians entertain'd the Audience with Smut, but the Modern

' Modern ones avoided that Liberty, and
 ' grew more reserv'd. This latter way he
 ' says was much more proper and Gentle
 ' than the other. That in his Opinion
 ' Rallying, no less than Railing, ought to
 ' be under the Discipline of Law ; That
 ' he who is ridden by his Jefts, and minds
 ' nothing but the Business of *Laughing*, is
 ' himself Ridiculous. And that a Man of
 Lib. 4. de
 Morib. cap. 6.
 14.

' Education and Sense, is so far from going
 these Lengths that he wont so much as
 ' endure the hearing some sort of Buf-
 foony.

And as to the point of Delight in general, the same Author affirms, ' That
 ' scandalous Satisfactions are not properly
 ' Pleasures. 'Tis only Distemper, and false
 ' Appetite which makes them Palatable.
 ' And a Man that is Sick, seldom has his
 ' Taste true. Besides, supposing we throw
 ' Capacity out of the Question, and make
 ' Experiment and Sensation the Judge ;
 ' Granting this, we ought not to chop
 ' at every Bait, nor Fly out at every
 ' Thing that strikes the Fancy. The meet
 ' Agreeableness must not over-bear us,
 ' without distinguishing upon the Quality,
 ' and the Means. Pleasure how charming
 ' soever, must not be fetched out of Vice.
 ' An Estate is a pretty Thing; but if we
 ' purchase by Falshood, and Knavery,
 ' we

Knavery, we pay too much for't. Some
 Pleasures are Childish, and others abo-
 minable; And upon the whole, pleasure,
 absolutely speaking, is no good Thing.
 And so much for the Philosopher. And
 because *Ribaldry* is used for Sport, a pas-
 sage or two from *Quintilian*, may not be
 unseasonable. This Orator does not only
 Condemn the grosser Instances, but cuts
 off all the *Double-Entendre's* at a Blow.
 He comes up to the Regularity of Thought,
 and tells us that the Meaning, as well as
 the 'Words of Discourse must be unsulli-
 ed. And in the same Chapter he adds that
 'A Man of Probity has always a Reserve
 in his Freedoms, and Converses within
 the Rules of Modesty, and Character:
 'And that Mirth at the expence of Vir-
 tue, is an Over-purchase, *Nimium enim
 risus pretium est si probitatis impendio con-
 stat.*

Thus we see how these great Masters
 qualify Diversion, and tie it up to *Pro-
 visoes*, and Conditions. Indeed to make
Delight the main busines of Comedy is an
 unreasonable and dangerous Principle: It
 opens the way to all Licentiousness, and
 Confounds the distinction between Mirth,
 and Madness. For if Diversion is the
 Chief End, it must be had at any Price.
 No serviceable Expedient must be refused,

M tho'

the never so scandalous! And thus the worst Things are said, and the best abus'd; Religion is insulted, and the most serious Matters turn'd into Ridicule! As if the Blind side of an Audience ought to be careis'd, and their Folly and Atheism entertain'd in the first Place. Yes, if the Palate is pleas'd, no matter tho' the Body is Poyson'd! For can one die of an easier Disease than Diversion? But Raillery apart, certainly Mirth and Laughing without respect to the Cause, are not such supreme Satisfactions! A Man has sometimes Pleasure in losing his Wits. Frensy, and Possession, will shake the Lungs, and brighten the Face; and yet I suppose they are not much to be coveted. However, now we know the Reason of the Profaneness, and Obscenity of the Stage, of their Hellish Curseing and Swearing, and in short of their great Industry to make God, and Goodness Contemptible: 'Tis all to Satisfie the Company, and make People Laugh! A most admirable Inflination! What can be more engaging to an Audience, than to see a Poor atheistically brave? To see him Charge up to the Canons Mouth, and defy the Vengeance of Heaven to serve them? Besides, there may be somewhat of Convenience in the Case. To fetch Diversion out of In-

Innocence is no such easy matter. There's no succeeding it may be in this method, without Sweat, and Drudging. Clean Wit, inoffensive Humour, and handsom Contrivance, require Time, and Thought. And who would be at this Expence, when the Purchase is so cheap another way? 'Tis possible a Poet may not always have Sense enough by him for such an Occasion. And since we are upon supposals, it may be the Audience is not to be gain'd without straining a Point, and giving a Loose to Conscience; and when People are sick, are they not to be Humour'd? In fine, we must make them Laugh, right or wrong, for Delight is the Chief End of Comedy. *Delight!* He should have said *Debauchery*. That's the English of the Word, and the Consequence of the Practice. But the Original Design of Comedy was otherwise; And granting 'twas not so, what then? If the Ends of Things are naught, they must be mended. Mischief is the Chief end of Malice, would it be then a Blemish in Ill-Nature to change Temper, and relent into Goodness? The Chief End of a Madman it may be is to Fire a House, must we not therefore bind him in his Bed? To conclude. If *Delight* without Restraint, or Distinction, without Conscience or Shame, is the Sunnow

pream Law of Comedy, 'twere well if we had less on't. Arbitrary Pleasure, is more dangerous than Arbitrary Power. Now nothing is more Brutal than to be abandoned to Appetite ; And nothing more wretched than to serve in such a Design. The *Mock Astrologer* to clear himself of this Imputation, is glad to give up his Principle at Last. *Let any Man* should think (says he) that I write this to make *Libertinism amiable*, or that I cared not to debase the End, and Institution of Comedy. (It seems then Delight is not the Chief End.) I must farther declare that we make not *Vicious Persons Happy*, but only as *Heaven makes Sinners so*, &c. If this will hold, all's well. But *Heaven* does not forgive without Repentance. Let us see then what Satisfaction he requires from his *Wild-Blood*, and what Discipline he puts him under. Why, He helps him to his Mistress, he Marries him to a Lady of Birth and Fortune. And now do you think He has not made him an Example, and punish'd him to some Purpose ! These are frightful Severities ! Who would be vicious when such Terrors hang over his Head ? And does *Heaven make Sinners happy* upon these Conditions ? Sure some People have a good Opinion of Vice, or a very ill one of Marriage, otherwise they would

would have charged the Penance a little more. But I have nothing farther with the *Mock-Astrologer*.

And now for the Conclusion of a Chapter, I shall give some Instances of the *Manners* of the Stage, and that with respect to Poetry, and Ceremony. *Manners* in the Language of Poetry, is a Propriety of Actions, and Persons. To succeed in this Business, there must always be a regard had to Age, Sex, and Condition : And nothing put into the Mouths of Persons which disagrees with any of these Circumstances. 'Tis not enough to say a witty Thing, unless it be spoken by a likely Person, and upon a proper Occasion. But my Design will lead me to this Subject afterwards, and therefore I shall say no more of it at present, but proceed to apply the Remark.

One Instance of Impropriety in *Manners* both Poetical and Moral, is their making Women, and Women of Quality talk Smuttrily. This I have proved upon them already, and could cite many more places to the same purpose were it necessary.

But I shall go on, and give the Reader some other Examples of Decency, Judgment, and Probability. *Dom-Sebastian* will help us in some Measure. Here

the *Mufi* makes a foolish Speech to the Rabble, and jests upon his own Religion. He tells them, *tho' your Tyrant is a Lawful Emperour, yet your Lawful Emperour is but a Tyrant, — That your Emperour is a Tyrant is most Manifest, for you were born to be Turks, but he has play'd the Turk with you.* And now is not this Man fit to Manage the *Alcoran*, and to be set up for an Oracle of State? Captain Tom should have had this Speech by right: But the Poet had a farther Design, and any thing is good enough for a *Mufi*.

p. 85.

p. 129.

Sebastian after all the Violence of his Repentance, his grasping at self Murther, and Resolutions for the *Cell*, is strangely pleased with the Remembrance of his *Incest*, and wishes the Repetition of it: And *Almeida* out of her Princely Modefty, and singular Compunction, is of the same Mind. This is somewhat surprising! *Oedipus* and *Jocasta* in *Sophocles* don't Repent at this rate.⁺ No: The horror of the first Discovery continues upon their Spirits: They never relapse into any fits of Intemperance, nor entertain themselves with a lewd Memory. This sort of Behaviour is not only more Instructive but more Natural too. It being very unlikely one should wish the repeating a Crime, when He was almost Distracted

+ Nor the Careless in the Mysterious Mother at

at the thoughts on't; At the thoughts on't;
tho' 'twas committed under all the Circum-
stances of Excuse. Now when Ignorance
and meer Mistake are so very disquieting,
'tis very strange if a Man should plague
his Mind with the Aggravations of Know-
ledge; To carry Aversion, and Desire, in
their full strength upon the same Object;
To fly and pursue with so much Eagerness,
is somewhat unusual.

If we step to the Spanish Fryar He will
afford us a Flight worth the observing,
'Tis part of the Addresses of *Torri smond* to
Leonora.
You are so Beautiful
So wondrous Fair, you justifie Rebellion;
As if that faultless Face could make no Sin,
But Heaven by looking on it must forgive.

These are strange Complements ! *Tor-
rismond* calls his Queen Rebel to her Head,
when he was both her General and her
Lover. This is powerful Rhetorick to
Court a Queen with ! Enough one would
think to have made the Affair desperate;
But he has a Remedy at Hand. The
Poet's Nasrum of Profaneness cures all.
He does as good as tell Her, she may Sin
as much as she has a Mind to. Her Face
is a Protection to her Conscience. For

Heaven is under a necessity to forgive a Handsom Woman. To say all this ought to be pass'd over in *Torrismond* on the score of his Passion, is to make the Excuse more scandalous than the Fault, if possible. Such Raptures are fit only for *Bedlam*, or a place which I shan't Name. *Love Triumphant* will furnish another Rant not altogether inconsiderable. Here *Celadon* a Maiden Lady, when she was afraid her Spark would be married to another, calls out presently for a *Chaos*. She is for pulling the World about her Ears, tumbling all the Elements together, and Expostulates with Heaven for making Humane Nature otherwise than it should have been.

p. 52.

Great Nature break thy chain that links together

*The Fabrick of this Globe, and make a Chaos,
Like that within my Soul.—*

Now to my fancy, if she had call'd for a *Chair* instead of a *Chaos*, trip'd off, and kept her folly to her self, the Woman had been much wiser. And since we have shown our Skill in vaulting on the High-Ropes, a little *Tumbling* on the Stage, may not do amiss for variety.

Now then for a jest or two. *Don Gomez* shall begin: And here he'll give us

a Gingle upon the double meaning of a Word.

I think, says Domipick the Fryar, it was my good Angel that sent me hither so opportunely. Gomez suspects him bri'd for no creditable Busines, and Answers,

Gom. Ay, whose good Angels sent you hither, that you know best Father.

These Spaniards will entertain us with more of this Fine Raillery. Colonel Sancho in *Love Triumphant* has a great stroak at it. He says his Bride *Dalinda* is no more *Dalinda*, but *Dalilah* the Philistine. p. 70.

This Colonel as great a Soldier as he is, is quite puzzled at a Herald. He thinks they call him Herod, or some such Jewish Name. Here you have a good Officer spoild for p. 61.

a miserable jest. And yet after all, this Sancho tho' he can't pronounce Herald, knows what 'tis to be *Laconick*, which is somewhat more out of his way. Thraso in *Terence* was a Man of the same size in *Enuch.* Sense, but for all that he does not quibble.

Albanact Captain of the Guards, is much King Arsh. about as witty as Sancho. It seems p. 2. *Emmeline* Heiress to the Duke of Cornwall was Blind. *Albanact* takes the rise of his Thought from hence; And observes that as Blind as she is, Cofwald would have no blind Bargain of her. Carlus tells Sancho he is sure of his Mistress, and has no more *Love Tri-* um. p. 26. *San-*

170 Immorality Encouraged

Sancho replies, *Indeed I have her License for it.* *Carlos* is somewhat angry at this Gingle, and cries, *what quibbling too in your Prosperity?* Adversity it seems is the only time for *quipping*. Truly I think so too. For 'tis a sign a Man is much Distress'd when he flies to such an Expedient. However, *Carlos* needed not to have been so touchy: For he can stoop as low himself upon occasion. We must know then that *Sancho* had made himself a Hunch'd Back, to counterfeit the *Conde Alonzo*. The two Colonels being in the same Disguise, were just upon the Edge of a Quarrel. After some Preliminaries in Railing, *Sancho* cries, *Don't provoke me; I am mischievously bent.*

Carlos replies, *Nay, you are Bent enough in Conscience, but I have a Bent Fist for Boxing.* Here you have a Brace of Quibbles started in a Line and a Half. And, which is worst of all, they come from *Carlos*, from a *Character of Sense*; and therefore the Poet, not the Soldier, must answer for them.

I shall now give the Reader a few Instances of the Courtship of the Stage, and how decently they treat the Women, and Quality of both Sexes. The Women who are secured from Affronts by Custom, and have a Privilege for Respect, are sometimes

times but roughly saluted by these Men of Address. And to bar the Defence, this Coarseness does not always come from Clowns, and Women-haters; but from Persons of Figure, neither singular, nor ill-Bred. And which is still worse, The Satyr falls on blindly without Distinction, and strikes at the whole Sex.

Enter Raymond a Noble-man in the p. 47.
Spanish Fryar.

*O Virtue! Virtue! What art thou become?
That men should leave thee for that Toy a woman,
Made from the Dross and Refuse of a Man;
Heaven took him sleeping when he made her too,
Had Man been waking he had ne'er consented.*

I did not know before that a Man's Dross lay in his Ribs; I believe sometimes it lies higher. But the Philosophy, the Religion, and the Ceremony of these Lines, are too tender to be touched. *Crión a Oedip. p. 3.* Prince in *Oedipus*, rails in General at the Sex, and at the same time is violently in Love with Enriquice. This upon the matter, is just as natural, as 'tis Civil. If any one would understand what the Curse of all tender hearted Women is, Belmour will inform him. What is it then? 'Tis the Old Batch. Pox. If this be true, the Women had p. 41. need lay in a stock of ill Nature betimes.

It

Immodesty Encouraged

It seems 'tis their only preservative. It guards their Virtue, and their Health, and is all they have to trust to. Sharper another Man of Sense in this Play, talks much at the same rate. Belinda would know of him where he got that excellent Talent of Rail-

ing? *Smiling* I would do it. *Smiling*

P. 35. Sharp. Madam the Talent was Born with me. —— I confess I have taken care to improve it, to qualify me for the Society of Ladies. Horner, a Topping Character in the Country Wife, is advised to avoid Women, and hate them as they do him. He Answers.

P. 22.

Dom Sebaf.
P. 5.

Because I do hate them, and would hate them yet more, I'll frequent e'm; you may see by Marriage, nothing makes a Man hate a Woman more than her Constant Conversation. There is still something more Coarse upon the Sex spoken by Dorax, but it is a privileged Expression, and as such I must leave it. The Relapse mends the Contrivance of the Satyr, refines upon the manner, and to make the Discourse the more probable, obliges the Ladies to abuse themselves. And because I should be loath to tire the Reader, Berinthia shall close the Argument. This Lady having undertook the Employment of a Procureress, makes this Remark upon it to her self.

*Epilogue to Berinthia. Drapery. A diverting
School for Scandal.*

Berinth.

*None of the belied things.
Proverbial wife, and quoted in the
Divorce.*

Berith. So here is fine Work! But there was no avoiding it. Besides, I begin to Fancy there may be as much Pleasure in carrying on another Bodies Intrigue, as ones own. This is at least certain, It exercises almost all the Entertaining Faculties of a Woman. For there is Employment for Hypocrisie, Invention, Deceit, Flattery, Mischief, and Lying.

Let us now see what Quarter the Stage gives to Quality. And here we shall find them extremely free, and familiar. They dress up the Lords in Nick-Names, and expose them in Characters of contempt. Lord Froth is explain'd a Solemn Coxcomb; And Lord Rake, and Lord Foplington give you their Talent in their Title. Lord Plausible in the Plain Dealer Acts a ridiculous Part, but is with all very civil. He tells

Double Dealer.
Person.
Dram.
Relapſe.
Provol'd
Wife.

Manly, he never attempted to abuse any Person. The other answers; What you were, p. 4. afraid? Manly goes on and declares, He would call a Rascal by no other Title, tho' his Father had left him a Duke's. That is, p. 2. he would call a Duke a Rascal. This I confess is very much Plain Dealing. Such freedoms would appear but oddly in Life, especially without provocation. I must own the Poet to be an Author of good Sense; But under favour, these Jests, if we may call them so, are somewhat high sea-

season'd, the Humour seems overstrain'd, and the Character push'd too far. To proceed. *Musapha* was selling *Don Alvarez* for a Slave. The Merchant asks what Virtues he has. *Musapha* replies, *Virtues quoth ab!* He is of a great Family and Rich, what other Virtues wouldst thou have in a Nobleman? *Don Carlos in Love Triumphant* stands for a Gentleman, and a Man of Sense, and overthrows *Musapha* a Bar's Length. He tells us Nature has given Sancho an empty Noddle, but Fortune in Revenge has fill'd his Pockets: just a Lord's Estate in Land and Wit. This is a handsome Complement to the Nobility! And my Lord *Salsbury* had no doubt of it a good Bargain of the Dedication. *Teresa's* general description of a Countess is considerable in it's Kind: But only 'tis in no Condition to appear. In the *Relaps*, Sir *Tumblety* who had mistaken Young Fashion for Lord *Foplington*, was afterwards undeceiv'd; and before the surprize was quite over, puts the Question, *is it then possible that this should be the true Lord Foplington at last?* The Nobleman removes the turban with great Civility and Discretion; Sir *Fopl.* *Why what do you see in his Face to make you doubt of it?* Sir without presuming to have an extraordinary Opinion of my Figure, give me leave to tell you, if you had seen

Don Schaff.
p. 16.

p. 17.

Don Quix.
part. 2.
P. 37.

seen as many Lords as I have done, you would not think it Impossible a Person of no worse Taille than mine might be a Modern Man of Quality.

Relapse.
p. 84.

I'm sorry to hear Modern Quality degenerates so much. But by the way, these Liberties are altogether new. They are unpractised by the Latin Comedians, and by the English too till very lately, as the *Plain Dealer* observes. And asfor Moliere in France, he pretends to fly his Satyr no higher than a Marquis.

*L'Ombre
de Moliere.*

And has our Stage a particular Privilege? Is their Charter inlarg'd, and are they on the same Foot of Freedom with the Slaves in the *Saturnalia*? Must all Men be handled alike? Must their Roughness be needs play'd upon Title? And can't they lash the Vice without pointing upon the *Vice is worse in the highest Characters.* Quality? Ifas Mr. Dryden rightly defines it, *a Play ought to be a just Image of Humane Nature;* Why are not the Decencies of Life, and the Respects of Conversation obser-*Essay*
Dram. p. 5. ved? Why must the Customs of Countries be Crois'd upon; and the Regards of Honour overlook'd? What necessity is there to kick the Coronets about the Stage, and to make a Man a Lord, only in order to make him a Coxcomb. I hope the Po-*ers* don't intend to revive the old Project of Levelling, and Vote down the House of Peers.

Peers. In earnest the *Play-House* is an admirable School of Behaviour! This is their way of managing Ceremony, distinguishing Degree, and entertaining the *Boxes*! But I shall leave them at present to the enjoyment of their Talent, and proceed to another Argument.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

*Remarks upon Amphytrion, King Arthur,
Don Quixot, and the Relapse.*

SECTION I.

THE following *Plays*, excepting the last, will fall under the same Heads of commendation with the former. However, since the *Poets* have here been prodigal in their Expence, and dress'd themselves with more Curiosity than ordinary, they deserve a proportionable Regard. So much Finery must not be crowded, I shall therefore make Elbow-Room for their Figure, and allow them the compass of a distinct Chapter.

To begin with *Amphytrion*. In this *Play* Mr. Dryden represents Jupiter with the Attributes of the supreme Being: He furnishes him with Omnipotence, makes him the Creator of Nature, and the Arbitrator of Fate; puts all the Functions of Providence in his Hand, and describes him with the Majesty of the true God. And when he has put Him in this glorious

N

Equi-

Amphytrion.
P. 1, 2, 3.
8, 9.

Remarks upon

p. 8, 17.

Equipage, he brings him out for Diversi-
on. He makes him express himself in
the most intemperate Raptures : He is
willing to *Renounce* his *Heaven* for his
Brutality, and employ a whole *Eternity*
in Lewdnes. He draws his Debauch at its
full Length, with all the Art, and Height-
nings, and Foulness of Idea imaginable.
This *Jupiter* is not contented with his suc-
cess against *Amphytrion*, unless he brings
Alcmena into the Confederacy, and makes
her a Party *ex post Facto*. He would not
have her think of her *Husband*, but her
Lover, that is, her *Whoremaster*. 'Tis not
the Success, but the manner of gaining it
which is all in all. 'Tis the Vice which
is the charming Circumstance. Innocence
and Regularity, are dangerous Compani-
ons ; They spoil Satisfaction, and make
every Thing insipid ! Unless People take
care to discharge their Virtue, and clear
off their Conscience, their Senses will va-
nish immediately ! For *Jupiter*, says he,
would *one nothing to a Name so dull as Hus-
band*. And in the next Page.

p. 18.

p. 19.

*That very name of Wife and Marriage,
Is poysen to the dearest sweets of Love.*

I would give the Reader some more
of these fine Sentences, but that they are
too

too much out of Order to appear. The truth is, Our Stage-Poets seem to fence against Censure by the excess of Lewdness; And to make the overgrown size of a Crime, a Ground for Impunity. As if a Malefactor should project his Escape by appearing too scandalous for Publick Tryal. However, This is their Armour of Proof, this is the Strength they retreat to. They are fortified in Smut, and almost impregnable in Stench, so that where they deserve most, there's no coming at them. To proceed. I desire to know what Authority Mr. Dryden has for this extraordinary Representation? His Original *Plautus*, is no Precedent. Indeed *Plautus* is the only bold Heathen that ever made Jupiter tread the Stage. But then he stops far short of the Liberties of the English *Amphytrion*: Jupiter at Rome, and London, have the same unaccountable Design; but the Methods of pursuit are very different. The First, does not solicit in scandalous Language, nor flourish upon his Lewdness, nor endeavours to set it up for the Fashion. *Plautus* had some regard to the Height of the Character, and the Opinion of his Country, and the Restraints of Modesty. The Sallies of *Aristophanes* do not come up to the Case; And if they did, I have cut off the Succours from that

Lunuch.

Quarter already. *Trovier's Chorus* is the next bold Man: However, here the Fable of *Jupiter* and *Diana* are just glanced at, and the Expression is clean; and He that tells the Story, a Young *Libertine*. These are all Circumstances of Extenuation, and give quite another Complexion to the Thing. As for the Greek Tragedians and *Seneca*, there's no Prescription can be drawn from them. They mention *Jupiter* in Terms of Magnificence and Respect, and make his Actions, and his Nature of a piece. But it may be the celebrated *Homer*, and *Virgil* may give Mr. Dryden some Countenance. Nor at all. *Virgil's Jupiter* is always great, and solemn, and keeps up the port of a Deity. 'Tis true, *Homer* does not guard the Idea with that exactness, but then He never sinks the Character into Obscenity. The most exceptionable Passage is that where *Jupiter* relates his Love Adventures to *Juno*. Here this pretended Deity is charm'd with *Venus's* Girdle, is in the height of his Courtship, and under the Ascendent of his Passion. This 'tis confess'd was a slippery Place, and yet the Poet makes a shift to keep his Feet. His *Jupiter* is little, but not nauseous; The Story, tho' improper, will bear the telling, and look Conversation in the Face. However; these Freedoms

doms of *Homer* were counted intolerable : I shall not insist on the Censures of *Justin Martyr* or *Clemens Alexandrinus*: Even the Heathen could not endure them. The Poets are lashed by *Plato* upon this score ; For planting Vice in Heaven, and making their Gods infectious. If Mr. *Dryden* answers that *Jupiter* can do us no harm. He is known to be an Idol of Lewd Memory, and therefore his Example can have no force : Under favour this is a mistake : For won't Pitch daub when a dirty Hand throws it ; or can't a Toad spit Poyson because she's ugly ? Ribaldry is dangerous under any Circumstances of Representation. And as *Menander* and St. *Paul* express it, *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*. I mention them both, because if the *Apostle* should be dislik'd, the *Comedian* may pass. But after all, Mr. *Dryden* has not so much as a Heathen Precedent for his Singularities. What then made him fall into them ? Was it the Decency of the Thing, and the Propriety of Character, and Behaviour ? By no means. For as I have observ'd before, Nature and Operations, ought to be proportion'd, and Behaviour suited to the Dignity of Being. To draw a Monkey in Royal Robes, and a Prince in *Antick*, would be Farce upon Euseb. prae.
par. 5.
vulg.

Ep. Ded.

Colours, entertain like a Monster, and please only upon the score of Deformity. Why then does Mr. Dryden cross upon Nature and Authority, and go off as he confesses, from the Plan of *Plautus*, and *Moliere*? Tho' by the way, the *English Amphitryon* has borrow'd most of the *Libertine Thoughts* of *Moliere*, and improv'd them. But to the former question. Why must the beaten Road be left? He tells us, *That the difference of our Stage from the Roman and the French did so require it.* That is, our Stage must be much more Licentious. For you are to observe that Mr. Dryden, and his Fraternity, have help'd to debauch the Town, and poison their Pleasures to an unusual Degree: And therefore the Diet must be dress'd to the Palate of the Company. And since they are made Scepticks they must be entertain'd as such. That the *English Amphitryon* was contriv'd with this View is too plain to be better interpreted. To what purpose else does *Jupiter* appear in the shape of *Jehovah*? Why are the incom- municable *Attributes* burlesqu'd, and Omnipotence applyed to Acts of Infamy? To what end can such Horrible Stuff as this serve, unless to expose the Notion, and extinguish the Belief of a Deity? The Perfections of God, are Himself. To ridicule

ridicule his Attributes and his Being, are but two Words for the same Thing. These Attributes are bestow'd on *Jupiter* with great Prodigality, and afterwards execrably outrag'd. The Case being thus, the Cover of an Idol, is too thin a pretence to Screen the Blasphemy. Nothing but Mr. Dryden's *Absalom* and *Achitophel* can out-do This. Here I confess the Motion of his Pen is bolder, and the Strokes more Black'd. Here we have Blasphemy on the top of the Letter, without any trouble of Inference, or Construction. This Poem runs all upon Scripture Names, upon Supposition of the true Religion, and the right Object of Worship. Here Profaneness is shut out from Defence, and lies open without Colour or Evasion. Here are no Pagan Divinities in the Scheme, so that all the Atheistick Raillery must point upon the true God. In the Beginning we are told that *Absalom*, was *David's* Natural Son: So then there's a Blot in his *Scutcheon*, and a blemish upon his Birth. The Poet will make admirable use of this Remark presently! This *Absalom* it seems was very extraordinary in his Person and Performances. Mr. Dryden does not certainly know how this came about, and therefore enquires of himself in the first place

N 4 Whe-

+ Midas - The golden Pippin and
Poor Vulcan will fall under the same
censure.

*Whether inspired with a diviner Lust,
His Father got him—*

This is down right Defiance of the Living God? Here you have the very Essence and Spirit of Blasphemy, and the Holy Ghost brought in upon the most hideous Occasion. I question whether the Torments and Despair of the Dam'd, dare venture at such Flights as these. They are beyond Description, I Pray God they may not be beyond Pardon too. I can't forbear saying, that the next bad Thing to the writing these Impieties, is to Suffer them. To return to *Amphytrion*. *Phabus* and *Mercury* have Manners assign'd very disagreeable to their Condition. The latter abating Propriety of Language, talks more like a *Water-man* than a Deity. They rail against the Gods, and call *Mars* and *Vulcan* the *two Fools of Heaven!* *Mercury* is pert upon his Father *Jupiter*, makes jests upon his Pleasures, and his Greatness, and is horribly Smutty and Profane. And all this Misbehaviour clothes from him in his own Shape, and in the sublimity of his Character. Had he run Riot in the Disguise of *Sofia*, the Discourse and the Person had been better adjusted, and the Extravagance more Pardonable.

But

But here the Decorum is quite lost. To see the *Immortals* play such Gambols, and the biggest Beings do the least Actions, is strangely unnatural. An Emperour in the Grimaces of an Ape, or the Diversions of a Kitten, would not be half so ridiculous. Now as Monsieur *Rapin* observes, without Decorum there can be no Probability, nor without Probability any true Beauty. Nature must be minded, otherwise Things will look forced, tawdry, and chimerical. Mr. *Dryden* discourses very handsomely on this Occasion in his Preface to *Allion* and *Albanus*. He informs us, *That Wit has been truly defin'd a propriety of Words and Thoughts.* — *That Propriety of Thought is that Fancy which arises naturally from the Subject.* Why then without doubt, the Quality of Characters should be taken care of, and great Persons appear like themselves. Yes, yes, all this is granted by Implication, and Mr. *Dryden* comes still nearer to the present Case. He tells us, *that Propriety is to be observed, even in Machines;* *And that the Gods are all to manage their Peculiar Provinces.* He instances in some of their respective Employments; but I don't find that any of them were to talk Lewdly. No; He plainly supposes the contrary. For as he goes on, *If they were to speak upon the*

W.K.

Remarks upon

the Stage, it would follow of necessity, that the Expressions should be *Lofty*, *Figurative*, and *Majestical*. It seems then their Behaviour should be agreeable to their Greatness. Why then are not these Rules observ'd, in the *Machines* of *Amphytrion*? As I take it, Obscenity has not the Air of Majesty, nor any Alliance with the *Sublime*. And as for the *Figurative* Part, 'tis generally of the same Cut with the *Lofty*: The Smut shines clear, and strong, through the Metaphor, and is no better screen'd than the Sun by a Glass Window. To use *Mercury* thus ill, and make the God of Eloquence speak so unlike himself, is somewhat strange ! But tho' the *Ancients* knew nothing of it, there are Considerations above those of *Decency*. And when this happens, *A Rule must rather be trespass'd on, than a Beauty left out.* 'Tis Mr. Dryden's Opinion in his *Cleomenes*, where he breaks the *Unity of Time*, to describe the Beauty of a Famine. Now Beaury is an arbitrary Advantage, and depends upon Custom and Fancy. With some People the Blackest Complexions are the handsomest. 'Tis to these *African* Criticks that Mr. Dryden seems to make his Appeal. And without doubt he bespeaks their Favour, and strikes their Imagination luckily enough. For to lodge Divinity and Scandal together ; To make the

the Gods throw Stars, like Snow-balls at one another, but especially to Court in Smut, and rally in Blasphemy, is most admirably entertaining ! This is much better than all the Necessies of *Decorum*. 'Tis handsomly contriv'd, to slur the Notion of a Superior Nature, to disarm the Terrors of Religion, and make the Court above as Romantick as that of the *Fairies*. A Libertine when his Conscience is thus reliev'd, and Atheism sits easie upon his Spirits, can't help being grateful upon the Occasion. Meer Interest will oblige him to cry up the Performance, and solicit for the Poet's Reputation ! Before I take leave of these *Machines*, it may not be amiss to enquire why the Gods are brought into the *Spiritual Court*. Now I suppose the creditableness of the Business, and the Poet's kindness to those *Places*, are the principal Reasons of their coming. However, He might have a farther Design in his Head, and that is, to bring *Thebes* to London, and to shew the Antiquity of Doctor's Commons. For if you will believe Mercury, this Conference between him and Phœbus, was held three thousand Years ago. Thus Shakespear makes *Hector* talk ^{19.} *Troil. and* about Aristotle's Philosophy, and calls Sir John Old Castle, Protestant. I had not ^{Cressid.} *The Hist.* ^{of Sir John} mention'd this Discovery in Chronology, ^{OldCastle.} but

Remarks upon

but that Mr. Dryden falls upon Ben Johnson, for making *Cataline give Fire at the Face of a Cloud before Guns were invented.*

By the Pattern of these pretended *Divities*, we may guess what sort of *Mortals* we are likely to meet with. Neither are we mistaken. For *Phædra* is bad enough in all Conscience, but *Bromia* is a mere Original. Indeed when Mr. Dryden makes *Jupiter*, and *Jupiter* makes the Women; little less can be expected. So much for *Ampbytrion*.

King Arthur.

I shall pass on to *King Arthur* for a Word or two. Now here is a strange Jumble and Hotch-potch of Matters, if you mind it. Here we have *Genii*, and *Angels*, *Cupids*, *Syrens*, and *Devils*; *Venus* and St. George, *Pan* and the *Parson*, the Hell of Heathenism, and the Hell of *Revelation*; A fit of Smut, and then a Jeſt about Original Sin. And why are Truth and Fiction, Heathenism and Christianity, the most Serious and the most Trifling Things blended together, and thrown into one Form of Diversion? Why is all this done unless it be to ridicule the whole, and make one as incredible, as the other? His *Airy* and *Earthly Spirits* discourse of the first state of Devils, of their *Chief*, of their Revolt, their Punishment, and Impostures

postures. This Mr. Dryden very Religiously calls a *Fairy way of Writing*, which depends only on the Forces of Imagination. Ep. Del.
What then, is the Fall of the Angels a Romance? Has it no basis of Truth, nothing to support it, but strength of Fancy, and Poetick Invention? After He had mention'd Hell, Devils, &c. and given us a sort of Bible-description of these formidable Things; I say after he had formed his Poem in this manner, I am surprized to hear him call it a *Fairy kind of Writing*. Is the History of Tophet no better prov'd than that of Styx? Is the Lake of Brimstone and that of Phlegeton alike dreadful? And have we as much Reason to believe the Torments of Titus and Prometheus, as those of the Devils and Damn'd? These are lamentable Consequences! And yet I can't well see how the Poet can avoid them. But setting aside this miserable Glost in the *Dedication*, the Representation it self is scandalously irreligious. To droll upon the Vengeance of Heaven, and the Miseries of the Damn'd, is a sad Instance of Christianity! Those that bring Devils upon the Stage, can hardly believe them any where else. Besides the Effects of such an Entertainment must needs be admirable! To see Hell thus play'd with is a mighty Refreshment to a lewd Conscience

science, and a byass'd Understanding. It heartens the Young Libertine, and confirms the Well-wishers to Atheism, and makes Vice bold, and enterprizing. Such Diversions serve to dispel the Gloom, and guild the Horrors of the *Shades below*, and are a sort of Ensurance against Damnation. One would think these Poets went upon absolute Certainty, and could demonstrate a Schemē of Infidelity. If they could, they had much better keep the Secret. The divulging it tends only to debauch Mankind, and shake the Securities of Civil Life. However, if they have been in the other World and find it empty, and uninhabited, and are acquainted with all the Powers, and Places in Being; If they can shew the Impostures of Religion, and the Contradictions of Common Belief, they have something to say for themselves. Have they then infallible Proof and Mathematick Evidence for these Discoveries? No Man had ever the Confidence to say This: And if he should, he would be but laughed at for his Folly. No Conclusions can exceed the Evidence of their Principles; you may as well build a Castle in the Air, as raise a Demonstration upon a Bottom of Uncertainty. And is any Man so vain as to pretend to know the Extent of Nature, and the Stretch of Possibility.

and

+ Hume upon his death-bed jested
about Chancery, &c.

see Horne's Letter to Adam Smith.

and the Force of the Powers Invisible? So that notwithstanding the Boldness of this *Opera*, there may be such a Place as Hell; And if so, a Discourse about Devils, will be no *Fairy Way of Writing*. For a *Fairy Way of Writing*, is nothing but a *History of Fiction*; A Subject of Imaginary Beings; such as never had any existence in Time, or Nature. And if as Monsieur Rapin observes, *Poetry* requires a mixture of *Truth and Fable*, Mr. Dryden may make his Advantage, for his *Play* is much better founded on Reality than He was aware of.

It may not be improper to consider in a Word or Two, what a frightful Idea the *Holy Scriptures* give us of Hell. 'Tis describ'd by all the Circumstances of Terror, by every Thing dreadful to Sense, and amazing to Thought. The Place, the Company, the Duration, are all Considerations of Astonishment. And why has God given us this solemn warning? Is it not to awaken our Fears, and guard our Happiness; To restrain the Disorders of Appetite, and to keep us within Reason, and Duty? And as for the *Apostate Angels*, the *Scriptures* inform us of their lost Condition, of their Malice and Power, of their Active Industry, and Experience; and all these Qualities Correspondent to the

the Bulk of their Nature, the Antiquity of their Being, and the Misery of their State. In short, they are painted in all the formidable Appearances imaginable, to alarm our Caution, and put us upon the utmost Defence.

Let us see now how Mr. Dryden represents these unhappy Spirits, and their Place of Abode. Why very entertainingly! Those that have a true Taste for Atheism, were never better regaled. One would think by this Play the Devils were meer Mermo's and Bugbears, fit only to fright Children and Fools. They rally upon Hell and Damnation, with a great deal of Air and Pleasantry; and appear like Robin Goodfellow, only to make the Company Laugh. Philidel: Is call'd a Puling Sprite. And why so? For this pious Reason, because

*He trembles at the yawning Gulph of Hell,
Nor dares approach the Flames lest he should
Singe*

His gaudy falken Wings.

*He sighs when he should plunge a Soul in
Sulphur,
As with Compassion touch'd of Foolish Man.*

a. 6.

The answer is, *What a half Devil's he?*

You

You see how admirably it runs all upon
the Christian Scheme ! Sometimes they
are *Half Devils*, and sometimes *Hopeful*-
Devils, and what you please to make sport
with. Grimbold is afraid of being whipt
through Hell at his return, for malcarrying
in his Business. It seems there is great
Leisure for Diversion ! There's *Whooping*
in Hell, instead of *Weping* and *Wailing*.
One would fancy Mr. Dryden had Day-
light and Company, when these lines were
written. I know his Courage is extraordi-
nary ; but sure such Thoughts could never
bear up against Solitude and a Candle !

b) And now since he has diverted himself
with the *Fears* of Christianity, I don't
wonder he should treat those that Preach
them with so much Civility ! Enter Poet
in the Habit of a Peasant.

We ha' Cheated the Person we'll Cheat him

For why should a Blockhead have one in ten ?
For prating so long like a Booklearned Soe,
Till Pudding and Dumpling burn to Par.

These are fine comprehensive Stroaks !
Here you have the *Iliads* in a Nutshell !
Two or three courtly Words take in the
whole Clergy ; And what is wanting in
Wit, is made up in abuse, and that's as well.

This is an admirable *Herod's Catch*, and the poor Tith-stealers stand highly indebted. They might have been tired with Cheating in *Prize*, had they not been thus seasonably reliev'd in *Doggrell*: But now there is *Musick* in playing the *Knave*. A Country-man now may fill his Barn, and humour his ill Manners, and sing his Conscience asleep, and all under one. I don't question but these four *Lines* steal many a Pound in the Year. + Whether the *Muse* stands indictable or not, the Law must determine. But after all, I must say the Design is notably laid. For Place and Person, for Relish and Convenience, nothing could have been better. The Method is very Short, Clear, and Practicable. + Tis a fine portable Infection, and costs no more Carriage than the Plague.

Well! The Clergy must be contented: It might possibly have been worse for them if they had been in his Favour: For he has sometimes a very unlucky way of shewing his Kindness. He commends the *Earl of Leicester*, for considering the *Friend*, more than the *Cause*; that is, for his Partiality; The Marques of *Halifax*, for quitting the *Helm*, at the approach of a *Storm*; As if Pilots were made only for fair Weather. Tis presum'd these Noble Persons are unconcern'd in this Character. However the

*Ep. Ded.
Don Sebast.*

*Ded. King
Arthur.*

+ See *Leslie* on the *Divine right of
Tyrants*.

Post

Poet has shewn his Skill in Panegyrick, and
'tis only for that I mention it. He com-
mends *Atticus* for his Trimming, and *Tul-
ly* for his Cowardise, and speaks meanly of
the Bravery of *Oato*. Afterwardshe pro-
fesses his Zeal for the Publick Welfare, and
is pleas'd to see the Nation so well secur'd from
Foreign Attempts, &c. However he is in *Ibid.*
some pain about the coming of the Gauls.
'Tis possible for fear they should invade the
Masts, and carry the *Opera's* into Captivity,
and deprive us of the *Ornaments of Peace*.

And now he has serv'd his Friends, he
comes in the last place like a modest Man,
to commend Himself. He tells us there
were a great many *Beauties* in the Original
Draught of this *Play*. But it seems Time has
since tarnish'd their Complexion; And he
gives *Heroick Reasons* for their not appear-
ing. To speak Truth, (all Politicks apart,) there
are strange Flights of Honour, and
Consistencies of Pretention in this Dedica-
tion! But I shall forbear the Blazon of the
Atchievement, for fear I should commend
as unluckily as Himself.

conqueror etc.

as I am a good man I
will be a good man if you will be a
good man I always good blood

Remarks upon

S E C T. II.

Remarks upon Don Quixot, &c.

Mr. Durfey being somewhat particular in his Genius and Civilities, I shall consider him in a Word or two by himself. This Poet writes from the Remance of an ingenious Author; By this means his Sense, and Characters are cut out to his Hand. He has wisely planted himself upon the Shoulders of a Giant; but whether his Discoveries answer the advantage of his standing, the Reader must judge.

What I have to object against Mr. Durfey shall most of it be ranged under these three Heads.

I. *His Profaneness, with respect to Religion and the Holy Scriptures.*

II. *His Abuse of the Clergy.*

III. *His want of Modesty and Regard to the Audience.*

I His Profaneness, &c.

And here my first Instance shall be in a bold Song against Providence.

Pro-

Providence that formed the Fair

In such a charming Skin,
Their Ouseide made his only care,
And never look'd within.

p. 18. p.
20.

Here the Poet tells you Providence makes Mankind by halves, huddles up the Soul, and takes the least care of the better Micerity. This is direct Blaspheming the Creation, and a Saryr upon God Almighty. His next advance is to drook upon the Resurrection.

Sleep and Indulge thy self with Rest;
Nor dream thou e'er shalt rise again. p. 20.

His Third Song makes a jest of the Fall, rails upon Adam and Eve, and burlesques the Conduct of God Almighty for not making Mankind over again.

When the World first knew Creation,
A Rogue was a Top-Profession,
When there was no more in all Nature but p. 37.

Four,
There were two of them in Transgression.

He that first to mend the Matter,
Made Laws to bind our Nature,
Should have found a way

O 3

To

*To make Wills obey,
And have Modelld new the Creature.*

In this and the following Page, the *Redemption* of the *World* is treated with the same respect with the *Creation*. The *World Redeemer*, which among Christians is Appropriated to our Blessed Saviour, and like the Jewish Tetragrammaton peculiarly reserv'd to the Deity; This adorable Name (*Redeemer*, and *Dear Redeemer*,) is applyed to the ridiculous *Don Quixot*. These Insolencies are too big for the Correction of a Pen, and therefore I shall leave them. After this horrible Abuse of the Works, and Attributes of God, he goes on to make Sport with his Vengeance. He makes the Torments of Hell a very Comical Entertainment; as if they were only Flames in Painting, and Terrors in Romance. The *Syrian Frogs* in *Aristophanes* are not represented with more Levity, and Drolling. That the Reader may see I do him no wrong, I shall quote the Places, which is the main Reason why I have transcrib'd the rest of his Profaneness.

*Appear ye fat Fiends that in Limbo do groan,
That were when in the Flesh the same Souls with
his own,*

Tou

You that always in Lucifer's Kitchen reside,
Amongst Sea-coal and Kettles, and Grease
newly try'd: viijij sis se we he bA

That pamper'd each day with a Garbage of
Soul, and all that M Broil Rabbits of Fools for a Breakfast on
Coals. and such : instill religion's cold
Buxom in vise and his soul M

In the Epilogue you have the History
of Baladon's Ass exposed, and the Beast
brought upon the Stage, to laugh at this
Miracle the better ;
And as 'tis said a parlous Ass once spoke,
When Crab-tree Cudgel did his Rage provoke.
So if you are not civil, — I fear
He'll speak again, —

In the Second Part the Devil is brought
upon the Stage. He cries as he hopes to be
Saved. And Sancho warrants him a good p.
Christian. Truly I think he may have more
of Christianity in him than the Poet. For
he trembles at that God, with whom the
other makes Diversion.

I shall omit the mention of several
Outrages of this Kind, besides his deep-
mouth'd Swearing, which is frequent; and
pass on to the Second Head, which is his
Abuse of the Clergy. And since Reveald
Religion has been thus horribly treated,

'tis no Wonder if the Minister of it have
the same Usage.

And here we are likely to meet with
some Passages extraordinary enough. For
to give Mr. Durfey his due, when he med-
dles with Church-men, he lays about him
like a Knight-Errant: Here his Wit and
his Malice, are generally in Extremes,
tho' not of the same Kind. To begin.
He makes the Quixotic Perek assist at the
ridiculous Ceremony of Don Quixote's
Kighting. Afterwards Squint-Sancho con-
fessing his Mistake to Quixot, tells him,
Ah consider, dear Sir, no Man is born Wise;
Then I think the greater Care should be
taken he is not bred a Fool. But
how does he prove this Memorable Sen-
tence? Because a Bishop is no more than
another Man, without Grace and Good Breed-
ing. I must needs say, if the Poet had
any share of either of these Qualities, he
would be less bold with his Superiors;
and not give his Clowns the liberty to
troll thus heavily upon a solemn Character.
This Sancho Mr. Durfey takes care to in-
form us, is a dry shrewd Country Fellow.
The reason of this Character is, for the
strength of it somewhat Surprizing. Tis
because he blunders out Proverbs upon all
Occasions, tho' never so far from the Purpose.
Now if bludging and talking nothing

Part 1.
P. 13.

Person.
Dram.

to

to the purpose; from Assignments of *Sheriff*, some Peoples *Days* are very shrewd Performances. *To proceed.* Sancho complaining of his being injured because it hindered him from better offers. *Peraz* the Curate is sorry for this Misfortune: For as I remember, say he, *in my book to give Terefa and you the Blessing.* To this Sancho replies. *A Phasis on your Blessing!* I perceived ^{p. 51.} I shall have Reasons to wish you hang'd for your Blessing. — *Good Justice of Bonnewton, good Conjunction Copulation.* For this Irreverence and Profaneness *Peraz* threatens him with Excommunication. Sancho tells him, *I care not, I shall lose nothing by it but a nap in the Afternoon.* In his second Part *Jodot* a Priest is call'd a *Holy Cormorant*, and made to dispatch half a Turkey and a Bottel of *Malaga* for his Breakfast. Here one Country Girl chides another for her shawcyness. *D'ee* (says she) make a Pimp of a Priest! Sancho interposes with his usual shrewdness: *A Pimp of a Priest, & that such Miricle:* In the Second Scene the Poet Provides himself another Priest to abuse. *Mamal* the Steward calls Bernardo the Chaplain Mr. Cuff-Cushion, and tells him *Where is a Pulpit he looks.* — In setting the Characters, *Mamal* is given out for a witty pleasant Fellow. And now you see he comes up to Expectation. To the Blind all

p. 10.

all Colours are alike, and Rudeness and Raillery are the same thing. Afterwards, *Bernardo* says Grace upon the Stage; and I suppose Prays to God to bless the Entertainment of the Devil. Before they rise from Table, the Poet contrives a Quarrel between *Don Quixot* and *Berpardo*. The Priest rails on the Knight, and calls him *Don Coxcomb*, &c. By this time you may imagin the Knight heartily Provok'd, ready to buckle on his *Beson*, and draw out for the Combat. Let us hear his Resentment.

p. 41.

Don Quix. Oh! thou old black Fox with a Firebrand in thy Tail, thou very Priest: Thou Kindler of all Mischiefs in all Nations. D'ye hear, *Hanniby*: Did not the Reverence I bear these Nobles——I would so shrum your Cassock you Church Vermin.

p. 47.

At last he bids *Bernardo* adieu in Language too Profane and Scandalous to relate. In the Fourth Act His Song calls the Clergy *Black Cattle*, and says no Body now minds what they say. I could alledge more of his Courtship to the Order, but, the Reader might possibly be tired, and therefore I shall proceed in the

part 1st.
p. 7. 8.
pt. 2d.
p. 57.

Third place, to his want of Modesty, and Regard to the Audience. As for *Smut* *Sancho* and *Teresa* talk it abroad, and single sens'd, for almost a Page together. *Mary* the

the *Bun* has likewise her share of this Accomplishment. The first Epilogue is Garnish'd with a Couplet of it; *Marcella* the Maiden Sheperdes raves in Raptures ^{pt. 2d.}
^{p. 60.} of Indecency; And sometimes you have it mixt up with Profaneness, to make the ^{pt. 1d.} Composition the stronger. But this Enter- ^{P. 3d.} tainment being no Novelty, I shall pass it ^{pt. 1d.} over; and the rather because there are some other Rarities which are not to be met with elsewhere. *and the like*

Here he diverts the Ladies with the Charming Rhetorick of *Snoty-Nose*, ^{pt. 1d.} *filthy* ^{p. 7. 8.} *Vermis in the Beard*, *Nitty Jerkin*, *Louse* ^{pt. 2d.} *Snapper*, *and the Letter in the Chamber-pot*; ^{p. 52.} ^{pt. 2d.} with an abusive description of a Countess, ^{p. 36. 49.} and a rude Story of a certain Lady with ^{pt. 2d.} some other Varieties of this Kind, too coarse ^{pt. 37. 44.} to be named! This is rare stuff for Ladies, and Quality! There is more of *Physick*, than *Comedy*, in such Sentences as these. *Crocer Metallorum* will scarce turn the Stomach more effectually. 'Tis possible Mr. *Durfey* might design it for a Receipt; And being Conscious the Play was too dear, threw a Vomit into the Bargain. I wonder Mr. *Durfey* should have no more regard to the Boxes and Pit! That a Man who has studied the *Stones of Decency and Good Manners* with so much Zeal, should practise with so little Address! Certainly

^{pref. pt. 3d.}

Ibid. *indefatigable Diligence, Care and Pain;* was never more unfortunate! In his Third Part, *Bamby* swears faster, and is more scandalous, and impudent, than in the other two. At those Liberties, and some in *Sancho*, the Ladies took Check. This Censure Mr. Dorsey seems heartily sorry for. He is extremely concern'd that the Ladies, that Essential Part of the Audience, should think, his Performance wanton and indecent, That is, he is very sorry they brought their Wits, or their Modesty along with them. However Mr. Dorsey is not so Ceremonious as to submit: He is resolved to keep the Field against the Ladies; And ondeavours to defend himself by saying, *I know no other way in Nature to do the Characters right, but to make a Rump speak like a Rump, and a clownish Boor blander, &c.*

Ibid.

By his Favour, all Imitations tho' never so well Counterfeited are not proper for the Stage. To Present Nature under every Appearance would be an odd undertaking. A *Midnight Cart*, or a *Dunghill* would be no ornamental Scene. Nastiness, and dirty Conversation are of the same kind. For Words are a Picture to the Ear, as Colours and Surface are to the Eye. Such Discourses are like dilating upon Ulcers, and Leprosies: The more

No-

Natural, the worse; for the Disgust al-ways rises with the Life of the Description. Offensive Language like offensive Smells, does but make a Man's Senses a burthen, and affords him nothing but Loathing and Aversion. Beastliness in Behaviour, gives a disparaging Idea of Humane Nature, and almost makes us sorry we are of the same Kind. For these Reasons 'tis a Maxim in Good Breeding never to shock the Senses, or Imagination. This Rule holds strongest before *Women*, and especially when they come to be enter-tain'd. The Diversion ought to be suited to the Audience; For nothing pleases which is disproportion'd to Capacity, and Gust. The Rudenesses and broad Jests of Beggars, are just as acceptable to Ladies as their Rags, and Cleanliness. To treat Persons of Condition like the *Mob*, is to degrade their Birth, and affront their Breeding. It levels them with the lowest Education. For the size of a Man's Sense, and Improvement, is discovered by his Pleasures, as much as by any thing else.

But to remove from Scenes of Decency, to Scenes of Wit. And here *Mannet* and *Sancho*, two pleasant sharp Fellows, will divert us extreamly. *Mannet* in the Disguise of a Lady addresses the Dutchess in this manner.

Person.
Dram.

manner. *Illustrious Beauty.* — I must desire to know whether the most purfumerous Don Quixot of the Manchissimo, and his squat reservoirs Pancha, be in this Company or no. This is the Ladies Speech! Now comes Sancho. Why took you Forsooth, without any more Flourishes, the Gouvernour Panca is here, and Don Quixotissimo too; therefore most afflictedissimum Matronissima, speak what you willissimus, for we are all ready to be your Servitorissimus.

p. 2d.
p. 31.

p. 51.

I dare not go on, for fear of overlaying the Reader. He may cloy himself at his Leisure. The Scene between the Taylor and Gardiner, lies much in the same Latitude of Understanding.

The Third Part presents a Set of Poppets, which is a Thought good enough; for this Play is only fit to move upon Wires. 'Tis pity these little Machines appear'd no sooner, for then the Sense, and the Actors had been well adjusted. In explaining the Persons, he acquaints us that Carasco is a Witty Man. I can't tell what the Gentleman might be in other Places, but I'm satisfied he is a Fool in his Play. But some Poets are as great Judges of Wit, as they are an Instance; And have the Theory and the Practice just alike.

Mr. Durfey's Epistles Dedicatory are to the full as diverting as his Comedies. A little of them may not be amiss. In

In his first, He thus addresses the Duchess of Ormonde. "Tis Madam from your Graces Prosperous Influence that I date my Good Fortune." To Date from time and Place, is vulgar and ordinary, and many a Letter has miscarried with it. But to do it from an *Influence*, is Astrological, and surprising, and agrees extremely with the ^{Pr f. pr.}
^{1st.} Hemisphere of the Play-House. These Flights one would easily imagine were the Poor Offspring of Mr. Durfey's Brain, as he very judiciously Phrases it.

One Paragraph in his Dedication to Mr. Montague is perfect Quixotism; One would almost think him enchanted. I'll give the Reader a Tast.

Had your Eyes shot the haughty Austerity
upon me of a right Courtier, — your valued ^{pt. 3d.} minutes had never been disturb'd with dilatory Trifles of this Nature, but my Heart on dull Consideration of your Merit, had supinely wish'd your Prosperity at a Distance. I'm afraid the Poet was under some Apprehensions of the Temper he complains of. For to my thinking, there is a great deal of *Sapiness*, and *dull Consideration* in these Periods. He tells his Patron *his Smiles have embolden'd him*. I confess I can't see how He could forbear Smiling at such Entertainment. However, Mr. Durfey takes Things by the best Handle, and is resolv'd to be happy

Remarks upon

happy in his Interpretation. But to be serious. Were I the Author, I would discharge my Muse unless she prov'd kinder. His way is rather to cultivate his Lungs, and Sing to other Peoples Sense; For to furnish him in a Word, he is *Vox et processus nudit.* I speak this only on Supposition, that the rest of his Performances are like These. Which because I have not perused, I can judge of no farther than by the Rule of *ex parte Herculem.* I shall conclude with Monsieur Boileau's *Art of Poetry.* This citation may possibly be of some Service to Mr. Durfey; For if not concern'd in the Application, he may at least be precaution'd by the Advice.

The Translation runs thus.

P. 53.

I like an Author that Reforms the Age;
And keeps the right Decorum of the Stage:
That always pleases by just Reason's Rule
But for a tedious Drail, a Quibbling Fool;
Who with low nauseous Baudry fills his Plays;
Let him be gone and on two Tressels raise
Some Smithfield Stage, where he may act his

Pranks,
And make Jack-puddings speak to Maurice-

books,

SECT.

S E C T . III .

Remarks upon the Relapse.

TH E Relapse shall follow Don Quixot, upon the Account of some Alliance between them. And because this Author swaggers so much in his Preface, and seems to look big upon his Performance, I shall spend a few more Thoughts than ordinary upon his Play, and examine it briefly in the Fable, the Moral, the Characters, &c. The Fable I take to be as follows.

Fashion a Lewd, Prodigal, younger Brother, is Reduced to Extremity: Upon his arrival from his Travels, he meets with Coupler, an old sharping Match-maker; This Man puts him upon a Project of Cheating his Elder Brother Lord Poplington, of a rich Fortune. Young Fashion being refused a Sum of Money by his Brother, goes into Coupler's Plot, bubbles Sir Tunbelly of his Daughter, and makes himself Master of a fair Estate.

From the Form and Constitution of the Fable, I observe

i. That there is a Mismother in the Title. The Play should not have been call'd the Relapse, or Virtue in Danger.

P Lovelace,

Remarks upon

Lovelace, and Amanda, from whose Characters these Names are drawn, are Persons of Inferior Consideration. Lovelace sinks in the middle of the Fourth Act, and we hear no more of him till towards the End of the Fifth, where he enters once more, but then 'tis as *Cave* did the Senate-House, only to go out again. And as for Amanda, she has nothing to do but to stand a shock of Courtship, and carry off her Virtue. This I confess is a great Task in the Play-House, but no main Matter in the Play.

The Intrigue, and the Discovery, the great Revolution and Success, turns upon Young Fashion. He without Competition, is the Principal Person in the Comedy. And therefore the Younger Brother, or the Fortunate Cheat, had been much a more proper Name. Now when a Poet can't rig out a Title-Page, 'tis but a bad sign of his holding out to the Epilogue.

I observe the Moral is vicious: It points the wrong Way, and puts the Prize into the wrong Hand. It seems to make Lovelace the reason of Desert, and gives Young Fashion a Second Fortune, only for Debanching away his First. A short View of his Character will make good this Reflection. To begin with him: He confesses himself a Rake, Swears, and Blasphemes, Curses,

Curses, and Challenges his Elder Brother, cheats him of his Mistress, and gets him laid by the Heels in a Dog-Kennel. And what was the Ground of all this unnatural Quarrelling and Outrage? Why the main of it was only because Lord Foltington refused to supply his Luxury, and make good his Extravagance. This Young *Fashion* after all, is the Poet's Man of Merit, he provides, a *Ploy* and a Fortune, on purpose for him. To speak freely, A Lewd Character seldom wants good Luck in Comedy. So that when-ever you see a thorough *Libertine*, you may almost Swear he is in a rising Way, and that the *Poet* intends to make him a great Man. In short: This *Play* perverts the End of *Comedy*. Which as Monsieur *Rapin* observes ought to regard Reformation, and publick Improvement. But the *Relaps* had a more fashionable Fancy in his Head. His *Moral* holds forth this notable Instruction.

13. That all *Younger Brothers* should be careful to run out their Fortunes as Fast, and as Ill as they can. And when they have put their Affairs in this Posture of Advantage, they may conclude themselves in the high Road to Wealth, and Success. For as *Fashion* Blasphemously applies it, Providence *Relapse*, p. takes care of Men of Merit. 19.

Refid.
G. p. 131.

Remarks upon

2dly. That when a Man is press'd, his Business is not to be govern'd by Scruples, or formalize upon Conscience and Honesty. The quickest Expedients are the best; For in such Cases the Occasion justifies the Means, and a Knight of the Post is as good as one of the Garter. In the

3d. Place it may not be improper to look a little into the Plot. Here the Poet ought to play the Politician if ever. This part should have some Stroaks of Conduct, and strains of Invention more than ordinary. There should be something that is admirable, and unexpected to surprise the Audience. And all this Fineness must work by gentle Degrees, by a due Preparation of Incidents, and by Instruments which are probable. Tis Mr. Rappin's Remark, that without Probability every Thing is Lame and Faulty. Where there is no pretence to Miracle and Machine, matters must not exceed the force of Belief.

To produce effects without Proportion, and likelihood in the Causle, is Farce, and Magick, and looks more like Conjuring than Conduct. Let us examine the Relapser by these Rules. To discover his Plot, we must lay open somewhat more of the Fable.

‘ Lord Foplington a Town Beau, had agreed to Marry the Daughter of Sir

‘ Tun-

R. flet.
p. 133.

‘ Tunbelly Clumsey a Country Gentleman,
‘ who liv’d Fifty Miles from London. Not
‘ withstanding this small distance, the
‘ Lord had never seen his Mistress, nor
‘ the Knight his Son in Law. Both par-
‘ ties out of their great Wisdom, leave the
‘ treating the Match to Coupler. When
‘ all the Preliminaries of Settlement were
‘ adjusted, and Lord Foplington expected
‘ by Sir Tunbelly in a few Days, Coupler
‘ betrays his Trust to Young Fabion. He
‘ advises him to go down before his Bro-
‘ ther: To Counterfeit his Person, and
‘ pretend that the strength of his Inclina-
‘ tions brought him thither before his Time,
‘ and without his Retinue. And to make
‘ him pass upon Sir Tunbelly, Coupler gives
‘ him his Letter, which was to be Lord
‘ Foplington’s Credential. Young Fabion
‘ thus provided, posts down to Sir Tun-
‘ belly, is received for Lord Foplington, and
‘ by the help of a little Folly and Knavery
‘ in the Family, Marries the young Lady
‘ without her Father’s Knowledge, and a
‘ Week before the Appointment.

This is the Main of the Contrivance. The Counter-turn in Lord Foplington’s ap-
pearing afterwards, and the Support of the main Plot, by Bull’s, and Nurse’s at-
testing the Marriage, contains little of Moment. And here we may observe that

Remarks upon

Lord Epolington has an unlucky Dis-
 agreement in his Character ; This Misfor-
 tune sits hard upon the Credibility of the
 Design. 'Tis true, he was Formal, and
 Fantastick, Smitten with Drefs, and Equipage,
 and it may be vapour'd by his Per-
 fumes ; But his Behaviour is far from that
 of an Ideot. This being granted, 'tis very
 unlikely this Lord with his five Thousand
 Pounds per Annum, should leave the Choise
 of his Mistress to Coupler, and take her
 Person and Fortune upon Content. To
 court thus Blindfold, and by Proxy, does
 not agree with the Method of an Estate,
 nor the Niceness of a Beau. However
 the Poet makes him engage Hand over
 Head, without so much as the sight of
 her Picture. His going down to Sir Tun-
 belly was as extraordinary as his Courtship.
 He had never seen this Gentleman. He
 must know him to be beyond Measure Sus-
 picious, and that there was no Admittance
 without Coupler's Letter. This Letter
 which was, the Key to the Castle, he for-
 got to take with him, and tells you 'twas
 stolen by his Brother Tam. And for his
 part he neither had the Discretion to get an-
 other, nor yet to produce that written by
 him to Sir Tunbelly. Had common Sense
 been consulted upon this Occasion, the Plot
 had been at an End, and the Play had sunk
 in

in the Fourth *Act*. The Remainder subsists purely upon the Strength of Folly, and of Folly altogether improbable, and out of Character. The *Waife* of Sir John Frienday's appearing at last, and vouching for Lord Foplington, won't mend the matter. For as the Story informs us, Lord Foplington never depended on this Reference: ^{p. 81.} He knew nothing of this Gentleman being in the Country, nor where he Lived. The truth is, Sir John was left in Town, and the Lord had neither concerted his Journey with him, nor engaged his Assistance.

Let us now see how Sir Tanbelly hangs ^{p. 83.} together. This Gentleman the Poet makes a *Juſtice of Peace*, and a *Deputy Lieutenant*, and seats him fifty Miles from London: But by his Character you would take him for one of Hercules's Monsters, or some Gyant in Guy of Warwick. His Behaviour is altogether *Romance*, and has nothing agreeable to Time, or Country. When *Fashion* and *Lory*, went down, they find the Bridge drawn up, the Gates barr'd, and the Blunderbuss cock'd at the first civil Question. And when Sir Tanbelly had Notice of this formidable Appearance, he Sallies out with the *Paſſe* of the Family, and marches against a Couple of Strangers with a *Life-Guard* of Halberds, Sythes, and

Remarks upon

and Pitchforks. And to make sure Work, Young *Hoy* is lock'd up at the first approach of the Enemy. Here you have Prudence and Wariness to the excess of Fable, and Frenzy. And yet this mighty Man of Suspicion, trusts Coupler with the Disposal of his only Daughter, and his Estate into the Bargain. And what was this Coupler? Why a Sharper by Character, and little better by Profession, Partner, Lord *Foplington* and the Knight, are but a Days Journey asunder, and yet by their treating by Proxy, and Commission, one would fancy a dozen Degrees of Latitude betwixt them. And as for Young *Fashion*, excepting Coupler's Letter, he has all imaginable Marks of Imposture upon him. He comes before his Time, and without the Retinue expected, and has nothing of the Air of Lord *Foplington*'s Conversation. When Sir *Tunbelly* ask'd him, *Pray where are your Coaches and Servants my Lord?* He makes a trifling Excuse. *Sir, that I might give you and your Fair Daughter a proof how impatient I am to be nearer akin to you, I left my Equipage to follow me, and came away Post, with only one Servant.* To be in such a Hurry of Inclination for a Person he never saw, is somewhat strange! Besides, 'tis very unlikely Lord *Foplington* should hazard his Com-

Complexion on Horseback, out-ride his Figure, and appear a Bridegroom in *Deshabille*. You may as soon perwade a Peacock out of his Train, as a Beau out of his Equipage; especially upon such an Occasion. Lord *Foplington* would scarcely speak to his Brother just come a Shore, till the Grand Committee of *Taylors*, ^{p. 11.} *Seam-tresses*, &c. was dispatch'd. Pomp, and Curiosity were this Lord's Inclination; why then should he mortifie without necessity, make his first Approaches thus out of Form, and present himself to his Mistress at such Disadvantage? And as this is the Character of Lord *Foplington*, so 'tis reasonable to suppose Sir *Tunbelly* acquainted with it. An enquiry into the Humour and Management of a Son in Law, is very Natural and Customary. So that we can't without Violence to Sense, suppose Sir *Tunbelly* a Stranger to Lord *Foplington*'s Singularities. These Reasons were enough in all Conscience to make Sir *Tunbelly* suspect a Juggie, and that *Fashion* was no better than a Counterfeit. Why then was the *Credentiaſt* swallow'd without chewing, why was not *Hoyden* lock'd up, and a pause made for farther Enquiry? Did this *Justice* never hear of such a Thing as Knavery, or had he ever greater reason to guard against it? More wary steps might

Remarks upon

might well have been expected from Sir Tumbelly. To run from one extrem of Caution, to another of Credulity, is highly improbable. In short, either Lord Foppington, and Sir Tumbelly are Fools, or they are not. If they are, where lies the Cunning in over-reaching them? What Conquest can there be without Opposition? If they are not Fools, why does the Poet make them so? Why is their Conduct so gross, so parti-colour'd, and inconsistent? Take them either way, and the Plot miscarries. The first Supposition makes it dull, and the later Incredible. So much for the Plot. I shall now in the

4th. Place touch briefly upon the Manners.

The *Manners* in the Language of the Stage have a Signification somewhat particular. Aristotle and Rapin call them the Causes and Principles of Action. They are formed upon the Diversities of Age, and Sex, of Fortune, Capacity, and Education. The Propriety of *Manners* consists in a Conformity of Practice, and Principle, of Nature, and Behaviour. For the Purpose. An old Man must not appear with the Profuseness and Levity of Youth; A Gentleman must not talk like a *Clown*, nor a *Country Girl* like a *Town* *Filt*. And when the Characters are feign'd 'tis

Manners.

'tis Horace's Rule to keep them Uniform, and consonant; and agreeable to their first setting out. The Poet must be careful to hold his Persons tight to their Calling and Pretensions. He must not shift, and shuffle their Understandings; Let them skip from Wits to Blockheads, nor from Courtiers to Pedants. On the other hand, If their Bushels is playing the Fool, keep them strictly to their Duty, and never indulge them in fine Sentences. To manage otherwise, is to desert Nature, and makes the Play appear Monstrous, and Chimerical. So that instead of an Image of Life, 'tis rather an Image of Impossibility. To apply some of these Remarks to the Relapser.

The fine Berinthia, one of the Top-Characters, is Impudent and Profane. Lovelace would engage her Secrecy, and bids her Swear. She answers I do.

Lov. By what? Berinth. By Woman.

Lov. That's Sneaking by my Deity, do it by your own, or I shall believe you.

Berinth. By Maythen.

This Lady promises Worthy her Endeavours to corrupt Amanda; and then they make a Profane Jeft upon the Office. In the progress of the Play, after a great deal of Lewd Discourse with Lovelace,

Ber-

p. 74.

R. & C. 2.

p. 40.

Tragedies

of the last

Age consi-

der'd, &c.

p. 113,

114

Berinthia is carried off into a Closet, and Lodged in a Scene of Debauch. Here is Decency, and Reservedness, to a great exactness! Monsieur Rapin blames Ariosto, and Tasso, for representing two of their Women over-free, and Airy. These Poets says he, rob Women of their Character, which is Modesty. Mr. Rymer is of the same Opinion: His words are these. Nature knows nothing in the Manners which so properly, and particularly distinguish a Woman, as her Modesty.—An impudent Woman is fit only to be kicked, and expos'd in Comedy.

Now *Berinthia* appears in Comedy 'tis true; but neither to be kick'd, nor expos'd. She makes a considerable Figure, has good Usage, keeps the best Company, and goes off without Censure, or Disadvantage. Let us now take a Turn or two with Sir Tumbelly's Heiress of 1500 pounds a Year. This young Lady Swears, talks Smut, and is upon the Matter just as rag-manner'd as *Mary the Buxome*. 'Tis plain the Relapser copied Mr. Durfey's Original, which is a sign he was somewhat Pinch'd. Now this Character was no great Beauty in *Baxome*; But it becomes the Knights Daughter much worse. *Buxome* was a poor Peasant, which made her Rudeness more Natural, and expected. But *Deputy Lieutenants* Children don't rule

use to appear with the Behaviour of Beggers. To breed all People alike, and make no distinction between a Seat, and a Cottage, is not over artful, nor very ceremonious to the Country Gentlemen. The Relapser gives Miss a pretty Soliloquy, I'll transcribe it for the Reader.

She Swears by her Maker, 'tis well I^{p. 59.}
have a Husband a coming, or Pde Marry
the Baker, I would so. No body can knock
at the Gate, but presently I must be lock'd
up, and here's the Young Gray-hound—can
run loose about the House all day long ; she
can, 'tis very well ! Afterwards her Lan-
guage is too Lewd to be Quoted. Here
is a Compound of Ill Manners, and Con-
tradiction ! Is this a good Resemblance of
Quality, a Description of a great Heiress
and the effect of a cautious Education ?
By her Coarseness you would think her
Bred upon a Common, and by her Confi-
dence, in the Nursery of the Play-House. I
suppose the Relapser Fancies the calling
her *Miss Hoxden* is enough to justify her Ill
Manners. By his favour, this is a Mistake.
To represent her thus unhewn, he should
have suited her Condition to her Name,
a little better. For there is no Charm in
Words as to Matters of Breeding. An un-
fashionable Name won't make a Man a
Clown. Education is not form'd upon
Sounds,

Sounds, and Syllables, but upon Circumstances, and Quality. So that if he was relolv'd to have thewn her thus unpolish'd, he should have made her keep Sheep, or brought her up at the Wab-Bout.

p. 61.

Sir Tunbelly accou'ts Young Fubian much at the same rate of Accomplishment. My Lord, — I humbly crave leave to bid you Welcome in a Cup of Sack-Wine. One would imagine the Poet was overdozed before he gave the Justice a Glais. For Sack-Wine is too low for a Petty Constable. This Peasantly expreſſion agrees neither with the Gentleman's Figure, nor with the rest of his Behaviour. I find we ſhould have a Credirable Magistracy, if the Relapſer had the Making them. Here the Characters are pinch'd in Sense, and ſtinted to ſhort Allowance. At an other Time they are over-indulged, and treated above Expeſtation.

For the purpose. Vanity and Formalizing is Lord Foplington's Part, To let him ſpeak without Aukwardneſs, and Affection, is to put him out of his Element. There muſt be Guimm and ſtrifening in his Discourse to make it Natural. However, the Relapſer has taken a fancy to his Perlon, and given him ſome of the moſt Gentile raillery in the whole Play. To give an Instance or two. This Lord in

in Discourse with Fabrion forgets his Name, flies out into Sense, and smooth expression, out-talks his Brother, and abating the starch'd Similitude of a Witch discovers nothing of Affectation, for almost a Page^{p. 42.} together He Relapses into the same Intemperance of Good Sense, in another Dialogue between him and his Brother. I shall cite a little of it.

T. Falst. Unless you are so kind to assist me in redeeming my Annuity, I know no Remedy, but to go take a Purse.

L. Fopl. Why Falst Tam — to give you my Sense of the Thing, I do think taking a Purse the best Remedy in the World, for if you succeed, you are reliev'd that way, if you are taken — you are reliev'd a' other.

Fabrion being disappointed of a supply^{p. 44.} quarrels his Elder Brother, and calls him the Prince of Coxcombs.

L. Fopl. Sir I am proud of being at the Head of so prevailing a Party.

T. Falst. Will nothing then provoke thee? Draw Coward.

L. Fopl. Look you Tam, your Poverty makes your Life so burthensome to you, you would provoke me to a Quarrel, in hopes either to slip through my Lungs into my Estate, or else to get your self run through the Guts, to put an End to your Pain. But I shall disappoint you in both, &c.

This

This Drolling has too much Spirit, the Air of it is too free, and too handsomely turn'd for Lord Foppington's Character. I grant the Relaps'd could not afford to lose these Sentences. The Scene would have suffer'd by the Omission. But then he should have contriv'd the Matter so, as that they might have been spoken by Young Fenton in *Asides*, or by some other more proper Person. To go on. Miss Hayden sparkles too much in Conversation. The Poet must needs give her a Shining Line or two, which serves only to make the rest of her dullness the more remarkable. Sir Turnell falls into the same Misfortune of a Wit, and rallies above the force of his Capacity. But the place having a mixture of Profaneness, I shall forbear to cito it. Now to what purpose should a Fool's Coat be embroidered? Finery in the wrong place is but expensive Ridiculousness. Besides, I don't perceive the Relaps'd was in any Condition to be thus liberal. And when a Poet is not overstock'd, to squander away his Wit among his Block-heads, is mere Distraction. His Men of Sense will smart for this prodigality. Lovelace in his Discourse of Friendship, shall be the first Instance. Friendship (says he) is said to be a Plant of sedious growth, its Root composed of tender Fibers,

This seems
to admit
of this kind
of entertainment

see p. 64.
At top.
Froct 2.
1p. 8.

p. 85.

nine

and F

nice in their *Taff*, &c. By this Description the Palate of a *Fiber*, should be somewhat more nice and distinguishing, than the Poets Judgment. Let us examin some more of his Witty People. Young *Fashion* fancies by *Misses* forward Behaviour, she would have a whole *Kennel* of *Beaux* after her at London. And then, *Hey to the Park, and the Play, and the Church, and the Devil.* ^{p. 64.} Here I conceive the ranging of the Period is amiss. For if he had put the *Play*, and the *Devil* together, the Order of Nature, and the Air of Probability had been much better observ'd.

Afterwards *Coupler* being out of Breath in coming up Stairs to *Fashion*, asks him *why the ——can't thou not Lodge upon the* ^{p. 94.} *Ground-Floor?*

T. *Fash.* Because I love to lie as near Heaven as I can. One would think a Spark just come off his Travels, and had made the *Tour of Italy and France*, might have rallied with a better Grace: However if he lodg'd in a *Garret*, 'tis a good Local Jest. I had almost forgot one pretty remarkable Sentence of *Fashion* to *Lory*. I shall shew ^{p. 15.} thee (says he) the excess of my Passion by being very Calm. Now since this Gentleman was in a Vein of Talking Philosophy to his Man, I'm sorry he broke off so quickly, Had he gone on and shewn him the Excess

Q.

of

of a Storm and no Wind stirring, the To-pick had been spent, and the Thought improv'd to the utmost.

Let us now pass on to *Worthy*, the *Relap-fer's* fine Gentleman. This Spark sets up for Sense, and Address, and is to have nothing of Affectation or Conscience to spoil his Cha-racter. However to say no more of him, he grows Foppish in the last Scene, and courts *Amanda* in Fustian, and Pedantry. First, He gives his Periods a turn of Verbi-fication, and talks *Prose* to her in *Meeter*. Now this is just as agreeable as it would be to *Ride* with one Leg, and *Walk* with the other. But let him speak for himself. His first Busines is to bring *Amanda* to an Aver-sion for her Husband; And therefore he perswades her to *Rouse up that Spirit Wo-man* ought to bear; and slight your God if he neglects his Angel. He goes on with his Orisons. *With Arms of Ice receive his Cold Embraces, and keep your Fire for those that come in Flames.* Fire and Flames is Met-tal upon Mettal; 'Tis false Heraldry. Ex-tend the Arms of Mercy to his Aid. His Zeal may give him Title to your Pity, altho' his Merit cannot claim your Love. Here you have Arms brought in again by Head and Shoulders. I suppose the Design was to keep up the Situation of the Allegory. But the latter part of the Speech is very Pithy.

p. 99.

Ibid.

He

He would have her resign her Virtue out of Civility, and abuse her Husband on Principles of good Nature. *Worthy* pursues his Point, and Rises in his Address; He falls into a Fit of Disfection, and hopes to gain his Mistress by cutting his Throat. He is for *Ripping up his Faithful Breast*, to prove the Reality of his Passion. Now when a Man courts with his Heart in his Hand, it must be great Cruelty to refuse him, ! No Butcher could have Thought of a more moving Expedient ! However *Amanda* continues obstinate, and is not in the usual Humour of the Stage. Upon this, like a well-bred Lover he seizes her by Force, and threatens to Kill her. *Nay struggle not for all's in Vain, or Death, or Victory, I am deter-*
p. 100.
min'd. In this encounter the Lady proves too nimble, and slips through his Fingers. Upon this disappointment, he cries, *there's Divinity about her, and she has dispens'd some Portion on't to me.* His Passion is Metamorphos'd in the Turn of a hand : He is refin'd into a *Platonick Admirer*, and goes off as like a *Town Spark* as you would wish, And so much for the Poet's fine Gentleman.

I should now examine the *Relapser's Thoughts and Expressions*, which are two other Things of Consideration in a Play. The *Thoughts or Sentiments are the Expressions of the Manners, as Words are of the Reasons, Reasons, &c.*

Q 2

Thoughts:

Thoughts. But the view of the Characters has in some Measure prevented this Enquiry. Leaving this Argument therefore, I shall consider his *Play* with respect to the *Three Unities of Time, Place, and Action.*

And here the Reader may please to take notice, that the Design of these Rules, is to conceal the Fiction of the *Stage*, to make the *Play* appear Natural, and to give it an Air of Reality, and *Conversation*.

The largest Compass for the first *Unity* is Twenty Four Hours: But a lesser proportion is more regular. To be exact, the Time of the History, or Fable, should not exceed that of the *Representation*: Or in other Words, the whole Business of the *Play*, should not be much longer than the Time it takes up in *Playing*.

The Second *Unity* is that of *Place*. To observe it, the *Scene* must not wander from one Town, or Country to another. It must continue in the same House, Street, or at farthest in the same City, where it was first laid. The Reason of this Rule depends upon the *First*. Now the Compass of *Time* being strait, that of *Space* must bear a Correspondent Proportion. Long Journeys in *Plays* are impracticable. The Distances of *Place* must be suited to Leisure, and Possibility, otherwise the superposition

position will appear unnatural and absurd.

The

Third Unity is that of *Action*; It consists in contriving the chief Business of the Play single, and making the Concerns of one Person distinguishably great above the rest. All the Forces of the Stage must as it were serve under one *General*: And the lesser Intrigues or Under-plots, have some Relation to the Main. The very Oppositions must be useful, and appear only to be Conquer'd, and Countermin'd. To represent Two considerable Actions independent of each other, Destroys the Beauty of Subordination, weakens the Contrivance, and dilutes the Pleasure. It splits the Play, and makes the *Poem* double. He that would see more upon this Subject may consult *Corneille*; to bring these Remarks to the Case in hand. And here we may observe how the *Relapser* fails in all the Rules above mention'd.

*Discourse
des Trois
Unitez.*

pt. 3d.

1st. His Play by modest Computation takes up a Weeks Work, but Five Days you must allow it at the Dowelt. One Day must be spent in the First, Second, and part of the Third *Act*, before Lord Faplington sets forward to Sir Tunbelly. Now the Length of the Distance, the Pomp of the Retinue, and the Niceness of the Person being consider'd; the Journey down, and

p. 88.

up again, cannot be laid under Four Days. To put this out of doubt, Lord *Foplington*, is particularly careful to tell *Coupler*, how concern'd he was not to overdrive, for fear of disordering his *Coach-Horses*. The Laws of *Place*, are no better observ'd than those of *Time*. In the Third *Act* the *Play* is in *Town*, in the Fourth *Act* 'tis stroll'd Fifty Miles off, and in the Fifth *Act* in *London* again. Here *Pegasus* stretches it to purpose! This Poet is fit to ride a Match with Witches. *Juliana Cox* never Switched a Broom-stock with more Expedition! This is exactly,

Titus at Walton Town, and Titus at Islington.

One would think by the probability of Matters, the *Plot* had been stolen from Dr. O——s.

The Poet's Success in the last *Unity of Action* is much the same with the former. *Lovelace*, *Amanda*, and *Berinthia*, have no share in the main Busines. These Second-rate *Characters* are a detached Body: Their Interest is perfectly Foreign, and they are neither Friends nor Enemies to the *Plot*. *Young Fashion* does not so much as see them till the Close of the Fifth *Act*, and then they meet only to fill the Stage: And yet these

these Persons are in the Poet's account very considerable; Insomuch that he has mis-named his *Play* from the Figure of Two of them. This strangeness of Persons, distinct Company, and inconnexion of Affairs, destroys the Unity of the *Poem*. The contrivance is just as wise as it would be to cut a Diamond in two. There is a loss of Lustre in the Division. Increasing the Number, abates the Value, and by making it more, you make it less.

Thus far I have examin'd the Dramatick Merits of the *Play*. And upon enquiry, it appears a Heap of Irregularities. There is neither Propriety in the *Name*, nor Contrivance in the *Plot*, nor Decorum in the *Characters*. 'Tis a thorough Contradiction to Nature, and impossible in *Time*, and *Place*. It's *Shining Graces*, as the Author *Prof.* calls them, are *Blasphemy* and *Bawdry*, together with a mixture of *Oaths*, and *Cursing*. Upon the whole; The *Relapser's Judgment*, and his *Morals*, are pretty well adjusted. The *Poet*, is not much better than the *Man*. As for the *Profane* part, 'tis hideous and superlative. But this I have consider'd elsewhere. All that I shall observe here is, that the Author was sensible of this Objection. His Defence in his *Preface* is most wretched: He pretends to know nothing of the Matter, and that 'tis all *Printed*;

See Chap.
2d.

Which only proves his Confidence equal to the rest of his Virtues. To out-face Evidence in this manner, is next to the affirming there's no such Sin as Blasphemy, which is the greatest Blasphemy of all. His Apology consists in railing at the *Clergy*; a certain Sign of ill Principles, and ill Manners. This He does at an unusual rate of Rudeness and Spite. He calls them the Saints with *Screw'd Faces, and Wry Mouths*. And after a great deal of scurrilous Abuse too gross to be mention'd, he adds; *If any Man happens to be offended at a Story of a Cock and a Bull, and a Priest and a Bulldog, I beg his Pardon, &c.*

Prof.

An Academy in Lithuania, for the Education of Bears, Pere Au- rill Voyage on Divers Etats, &c.

p. 240.

See Kilmer's
Defense of
Plays p. 102.

CHAP. VI.

The Opinion of the Pagans, of the Church, and State, concerning the Stage.

HAVING in the foregoing Chapters dis-
cover'd some part of the Disorders
of the English Stage; I shall in this Last,
present the Reader with a short View of
the Sense of Antiquity, To which I shall
add some Modern Authorities; From all
which it will appear that Plays have ge-
nerally been look'd on as the Nurseries
of Vice, the Corrupters of Youth, and the
Grievance of the Country where they are
suffer'd

This proof from *Testimony* shall be
ranged under these three Heads.

Under the First, I shall cite some of
the most celebrated Heathen Philosophers,
Orators, and Historians; Men of the big-
gest Consideration, for Sense, Learning,
and Figure. The

Second, Shall consist of the Laws and
Constitutions of Princes, &c. The

Third, Will be drawn from Church-Re-
cords, from Fathers, and Councils of unex-
ceptionable

ceptionable Authority, both as to Persons, and Time.

1st. I shall produce some of the most celebrated Heathen Philosophers &c. To begin with *Plato*. ‘ This Philosopher tells us that *Plays* raise the Passions, and per-
Prepar. vert the use of them, and by consequence
Evang. ‘ are dangerous to Morality: For this
‘ Reason he banishes these Diversions his
‘ Common-Wealth.

Xenophon who was both a Man of *Let-
ters* and a great *General*, commends the
Cyropaed. Persians for the Discipline of their Education. ‘ They won’t (says he) so much
p. 34. ‘ as suffer their Youth to hear any thing
‘ that’s Amorous or Tawdry. They
were afraid want of Ballast might make
them miscarry, and that ’twas dangerous
to add weight to the Byass of Nature.

Aristotle lays it down for a Rule , that
‘ the Law ought to forbid Young People
Polit. Lib. ‘ the seeing of *Comedies*. Such permissions
7. cap. 17. ‘ not being safe till Age and Discipline
‘ had confirm’d them in sobriety, forti-
‘ fied their Virtue, and made them as it
‘ were proof against Debauchery. This
Polit. Philosopher who had look’d as far into
Lib. 8. Humane Nature as any Man, observes
farther, ‘ That the force of Musick and
‘ Action is very affecting. It commands
‘ the Audience and changes the Passions to

' a Resemblance of the Matter before them,
So that where the Representation is foul,
the Thoughts of the Company must suf-
fer.

Tully crys out upon ' *Licentious Plays* Tus. Quæst.
' and *Poems*, as the bane of Sobriety, and
' wise Thinking: That *Comedy* subsists up- Lib. 4.
De Lex.
' on Lewdness, and that Pleasure is the
' Root of all Evil.

Livy, reports the Original of *Plays*
among the *Romans*. ' He tells us they
' were brought in upon the score of Re-
' ligion, to pacifie the Gods, and remove a
' Mortality. But then He adds that the
' Motives are sometimes good, when the
' Means are stark naught: That the Re- Dec. 1.
' medy in this case was worse than the Lib. 7.
' Disease; and the Atonement more Infe-
' ctious than the Plague.

Valerius Maximus, Contemporary with
Livy, gives much the same Account of
the rise of *Theatres* at *Rome*. ' Twas De-
' votion which built them. And as for
' the Performances of those Places, which
' Mr. Dryden calls the *Ornaments*, this Au-
' thor censures as the Blemishes of *Peace*.
And which is more, He affirms ' They
' were the Occasions of Civil Distractiōns;
' and that the *State* first Blush'd and
' then Bled, for the Entertainment. He Lib. 2.
' concludes the consequences of *Plays* in- cap. 4.
' tolerable,

cap. 6.

' tolerable; And that the *Misfiances* did well
 ' in clearing the Country of them. *Seneca*
 ' complains heartily of the Extravagance
 ' and Debauchery of the Age: And how
 ' forward People were to improve in that
 ' which was naught. That scarce any Body
 ' would apply themselves to the Study of
 ' Nature and Morality, unless when the
 ' *Play-House* was shut, or the Weather
 ' foul. That there was no body to teach
 ' *Philosophy*, because there was no body
 ' to Learn it: But that the *Stage* had *Nur-*
 ' *series*, and Company enough. This Mis-
 ' application of time and Fancy, made
 ' Knowledge in so ill a Condition. This
 ' was the Cause the Hints of Antiquity
 ' were no better pursued; that some In-
 ' ventions were funk, and that Humane
 ' Reason grew Downwards rather than
 ' otherwise. And elsewhere he avers that
 ' there is nothing more destructive to Good
 ' Manners than to run Idling to see *Sights*.
 ' For there Vice makes an insensible Ap-
 ' proach, and steals upon us in the Dis-
 ' guise of pleasure.

*Natural
Quest Lib.*

7. cap. 32.

*Epist. 7.**Annal.**Lib. 14.**cap. 14.*

' *Tacitus* relating how *Nero* hired de-
 ' cay'd Gentlemen for the *Stage*, com-
 ' plains of the Mismanagement; And lets
 ' us know 'twas the part of a Prince to re-
 ' leive their Necessity, and not to Tempt
 ' it. And that his Bounty should rather
 ' have

' have set them above an ill practice, than
' driven them upon't.

And in another place, He informs us that, ' the German Women were Guarded against danger, and kept their Honour De Mr. German. cap. 19. out of Harms-way, by having no Play-Houses amongst them.

Plutarch are dangerous to corrupt Young People; And therefore Stage-Poetry when it grows too hardy, and Lentious, ought to be checkt. This was the Opinion of these Celebrated Authors with respect to Theatres : They Charge them with the Corruption of Principles, and Manners, and lay in all imaginable Caution against them. And yet these Men had seldom any thing but this World in their Scheme ; and form'd their Judgments only upon Natural Light, and Common Experience. We see then to what sort of Conduct we are oblig'd. The Case is plain ; Unless we are little enough to renounce our Reason, and fall short of Philosophy, and live under the Pitch of Heathenism.

To these Testimonies I shall add a Couple of Poets, who both seem good Judges of the Affair in Hand.

The First is Ovid, who in his Book *De Arte Amandi*, gives his Reader to understand that the Play-House was the most likely

ly Place for him to Forage in. Here would be choice of all sorts: Nothing being more common than to see Beauty surpriz'd, Women debatuch'd, and Wenches Pick'd up at these Diversions.

Lib. I.

*Sed tu praeclique curvis venerare Theatris,
Hæc loca sunt voto fertiliora tuo.
— ruit ad celebres cultissima Fæmina
Ludos ;
Copia judicium sepe morata meam est.
Spectatum veniunt, veniunt Spectentur ut
ipse ;
Ille locus casti damna pudoris habet.*

And afterwards relating the imperfect beginning of *Plays* at the Rape of the *Sabine* Virgins, he adds,

*Scilicet ex illo solennia more Theatra
Nunc quoque formosis insidiosa manent.*

This Author sometime after wrote the *Remedy of Love*. Here he pretends to Prescribe for Prudence, if not for Sobriety. And to this purpose, He forbids the seeing of *Plays*, and the reading of *Poets*, especially some of them. Such Recreations being apt to feed the *Distemper*, and make the Patient Relapse.

At

*At tanti tibi sit non indulgere Theatris
Dum bene de vacuo Pectore cedat amor,
Enervant animos Cithara, Cantusque, lyra-
que*

Et vox, & numeris brachia mota suis. Remed.
Amor.
Illi assidue siti saltantur amantis,
Quid caritas, actor, quid juvet, arte docet.

In his *De Tristibus*, He endeavours to make some Amends for his scandalous Poems, and gives *Augustus* a sort of Plan for a Publick Reformation. Amongst other Things, he advises the suppressing of Plays, as being the promoters of Lewdness, and Dissolution of Manners.

*Ut tamen hoc fatear ludi quoque semina Lib. 2.
præbent
Nequitia, tolli tota Theatra jube.*

To the Testimony of *Ovid*, I could add *Plautus*, *Propertius*, and *Juvenal*, but being not willing to overburthen the Reader, I shall content my self with the Plain-Dealer as one better known at Home.

This Poet in his *Dedication* to Lady B, some Eminent Procurress, pleads the Merits of his Function, and insists on being Billeted upon Free Quarter. Madam (says he) *I think a Poet ought to be as free of your*

Ep. Ded.

your Houses, as of the Play-Houses; since he contributes to the support of both; and is as necessary to such as you, as the Ballad-singer to the Pick-purse, in Convening the Cullies at the Theatres to be pick'd up, and Carried to a Supper, and Bed, at your Houses. This is frank Evidence, and ne're the les true, for the Air of a Jeſt.

I shall now in the Second

Place, proceed to the *Censures* of the State; And shew in a few Words how much the Stage stands discouraged by the Laws of other Countries and our own.

Plut. De.
Glor. A.
theniens.

To begin with the *Athenians*. This People tho' none of the worst Friends to the *Play-House* thought a *Comedy* so un-reputable a Performance, that they made a Law that no Judge of the *Areopagus* should make one.

Plut. La.
con Insti.
tur.

The *Lacedemonians*, who were remarkable for the Wisdom of their *Laws*, the Sobriety of their *Manners*, and their Breeding of brave Men. This *Government* would not endure the *Stage* in any Form, nor under any Regulation.

Cic. de Re-
pub. Lib.
4. cited by
St. Augu-
stine.
Lib. 2.
de civ. Dic.
esp. 13.

To pass on to the *Romans*. Tully informs us 'that their *Predeceſſours* counted all *Stage-Plays* uncreditable and Scandalous. In so much that any *Roman* who turn'd *Actor* was not only to be Degraded, but likewise as it were disincorporated, and

and unnaturalized by the Order of the Censors.

St. Augustine in the same Book, commends the Romans for refusing the *Jus Civitatis* to Players, for seizing their Freedoms, and making them perfectly Foreign to their Government.

We read in Livy that the Young People in Rome kept the *Fabula Attellana* to themselves. 'They would not suffer this Diversion to be blemish'd by the Stage. *Ab Historiis
omnibus Poli-
lui.*' For this Reason, as the Historian observes, the Actors of the *Fabula Attellana* were neither expell'd their Tribe, nor refused to serve in Arms; Both which Penalties it appears the Common Players lay under.

In the Theodosian Code, Players are call'd *Personae in honeste*; that is, to Translate it softly, persons Maim'd, and Blemish'd in their Reputation. Their Pictures might be seen in the Play-House, but were not permitted to hang in any creditable Place *in loco Ho-*
neste. of the Town. Upon this Text Gothofred tells us the Function of Players was counted scandalous by the Civil Law. *L. 4.* And that those who came upon the Stage to divert the people, had a mark of Infamy set upon them. *Famosi sunt ex Edicto.*

I shall now come down to our own Constitution. And I find by 39 *Eliz.* cap. 4. 1 *Fac. cap. 7.* That all Beauf-
R wards, 376.

*L. 1. Sect. 6.
de his qui*

*notantur
infamia.*

Gothofred.

Ibid. p.

wards, Common Players of Enter-
ludes, Counterfeit Egyptians, &c. shall
be taken, adjudged and deem'd Rogues,
Gagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and
shall sustain all Pain and Punishment,
as by this Act is in that behalf appointed.

The Penalties are infamous to the last degree,
and Capital too, unless they give over. 'Tis
true, the first *Act* excepts those *Players* which
belong to a Baron or other Personage of
higher Degree, and are authorized to play
under the Hand and Seal of Armes of such
Baron, or Personage. But by the later Sta-
tute this Priviledge of *Licensing* is taken
away: And all of them are expressly brought
under the Penalty without Distinction.

About the Year 1580, there was a Peti-
tion made to Queen Elizabeth for suppres-
sing of *Play-Houses*. 'Tis somewhat re-
markable, and therefore I shall transcribe
some part of the Relation.

Many Godly Citizens, and other well dis-
posed Gentlemen of London, considering that
Play-Houses and *Dicing-Houses*, were Traps
for Young Gentlemen and others, and per-
ceiving the many Inconveniences and great
damage that would ensue upon the long suf-
fering of the same, not only to particular
Persons but to the whole City; And that it
would also be a great disparagement to the
Governours, and a dishonour to the Govern-
ment

ment of this Honourable City, if they should any longer continue, acquainted some Pious Magistrates therewith, desiring them to take some course for the suppression of Common Play-Houses, &c. within the City of London and Liberties thereof; who thereupon made humble suit to Queen Elizabeth and her Privy Council, and obtain'd leave of her Majesty to thrust the Players out of the City, and to pull down all Play-Houses, and Dining-Houses ^{his Master,} ^{lately found} within their Liberties, which accordingly was ^{out, &c.} effected. And the Play-Houses in Grace-Church-street, &c. were quite put down and suppress'd.

I shall give a Modern Instance or two from France, and so conclude these Authorities.

*Gazett
Roterdam.
Dec. 20.
Paris.*

In the Year 1696. we are inform'd by a Dutch Print, M. L' Archevêque appuyé, &c. 'That the Lord Arch-Bishop supported by the Interest of some Religious Persons at Court, has done his utmost to suppress the Publick Theatres by degrees; or at least to clear them of Profaneness.

And last Summer the Gazetts in the Paris Article affirm, 'That the King has order'd the Italian Players to retire out of France because they did not observe his Majesties Orders, but represented immoral Pieces, and did not correct their Obscenities, and indecent Gestures.

*French
Amster-
dam Her-
lem Ga-
zett.
Paris,
May 17.*

The Opinion of the State

At the same Intelligence the next Week after, acquaints us, 'that some Persons of the first Quality at Court, who were the Protectors of these Comedians, had solicited the French King to recal his Order against them, but their Request had no success.'

And here to put an end to the Modern Authorities, I shall subjoyn a sort of *Pastoral Letter* publish'd about two Years since by the Bishop of Arras in Flanders. The Reader shall have as much of it as concerns him in both Languages.

In this Year 1696. was so important to the Duke of M. A. Armes, &c. &c. That the King of France, who had been so long Referring the Petition of the Comte, to give his Answer, to the Parliament of Paris; or is ready to accept the same of the

MAN.

MANDEMENT DE MONSEIGNEUR L'ILLUSTRE ET REVERENDISSIME EVEQUE D'ARRAS CONTRE LA COMEDIE.

GUY DE SEVE DE ROCHE CHOUART
par la grace de Dieu & du Saint Siege Apo-
stolique Eveque d'Arras, A tous fideles dela Ville d'
Arras Salut & Benediction. Il faut ignorer sa Re-
ligion pour ne pas connatre l'horreur qu'elle a mar-
quee dans tous les temps des Spectacles, & de la
Comedie en particulier. Les saints Peres la cou-
damnent dans leurs écrits; Ils la regardent com-
me un reste du paganisme, & Comme une école d'
impureté. L'Eglise l'a toujours regardée avec abo-
mination, & si elle n'a pas absolument rejette de
son sein ceux qui exercent ce métier infame &
scandaleux, elle les prive publiquement des Sacre-
mens, & n'oublie rien pour marquer en toutes ren-
countrées son aversion pour cet état & pour l'inspirer
à ses Enfans. Des Rituels de Diocèses tres regles
les mettent au nombre des personnes que les Curés
sont obligés de traiter comme excommunicés; Celui
de Paris les joint aux Sorciers, & aux Magiciens,
& les regarde comme manifestement infames; Le
Eveques les plus saints leur font refuser publiquement,
les Sacremens; Nous avons vu un des premiers
Eveques de France ne vouloir pas par cette raison re-
cevoir au mariage un homme de cet état; un autre
ne vouloir pas leur accorder la terre Sainte; Et dans

les Statuts d'un pretre bien plus illustre par ses me-
rites, par sa Piété, & par l'austérité de sa vie que
par la pourpre dont il est revestu, on les trouve avec
les concubinaires, les Usuriers, les Blasphemateurs,
les Femmes debauchées, les excommuniés dénoncés,
les Infames, les Simoniaques, & autres personnes
scandaleuses mis au nombre de ceux à qui on doit re-
fuser publiquement la Communion.

Il est donc impossible de justifier la Comedie sans
veuloir condamner l'Eglise, les saints peres, les plus
saint Prelats, mais il ne l'est pas moins de justifier
ceux qui par leur assistance a ces spectacles non seule-
ment prennent part au mal qui s'y fait, mais contribue-
nt en même temps à retenir ces malheureux mini-
stres de Satan dans une profession, qui les séparent
des Sacremens de l'Eglise les met dans un état per-
petuel de peché & hors de salut s'ils ne l'abandon-
nent.-----

Et à égard des Comediens & Commediennes, Nous
defendons très expressément à nos pasteurs & à nos
Confesseurs de les recevoir aux Sacremens si ce n'est

Trois Let-
tres Pasto-
rales De-
Monsig-
neur L'
Eveque
D'Arras
See.
A Delf.

qu'ils aient fait Pénitence de leur peché, donné des
preuves d'amendement, renoncé à leur Etat, & re-
pas pas une satisfaction publique telle que nous juge-
rons à propos de leur ordonner, le Scandale public
qu'ils ont donné. Fait & ordonné à Arras le qua-
trième jour de Decembre mil six cent quatre-vingt
quinze.

1697.

Guy Evêque d'Arras

Et plus bas

Par Monseigneur

CARON.

In

In English thus,

An Order of the most Illustrious and most Reverend Lord Bishop of Arras against Plays.

GUY DE SEVE DE ROCHE CHOUART by the grace of God, &c. Bishop of Arras. To all the Faithful in the Town of Arras Health and Benefit. A Man must be very Ignorant of his Religion, not to know the great disgust it has always declar'd, for Publick Sights, and for Plays in particular. The Holy Fathers condemn them in their Writings; They look upon them as reliques of Heathenism, and Schools of Debauchery. They have been always abominated by the Church; And notwithstanding those who are concern'd in this Scandalous Profession, are not absolutely expell'd by a Formal Excommunication; yet She publickly refuses them the Sacraments, and omits nothing upon all Occasions, to shew her Aversion for this Employment, and to transuse

' the same sentiments into her Children.
' The *Rituals* of the best govern'd Dioceses,
' have ranged the *Players* among those
' whom the Parish Priests are oblig'd to
' treat as Excommunicated Persons. The
' *Ritual of Paris* joyns them with Sorce-
' rers, and Magicians, and looks upon them
' as notoriously infamous; The most emi-
' nent Bishops for Piety, have publickly
' denied them the Sacraments: For this
' reason, we our selves have known one
' of the most considerable Bishops in France,
' turn back a *Player* that came to be Mar-
' ried; And an other of the same Order,
' refused to bury them in Consecrated
' Ground: And by the *Orders* of a Bishop,
' who is much more illustrious for his
' Worth, for his Piety, and the Strictness
' of his Life, than for the *Purple* in his
' Habit; They are thrown amongst For-
'nicators, Usurers, Blasphemers, Lewd
' Women, and declar'd Excommunicates,
' amongst the Infamous, and Simoniacal,
' and other Scandalous Persons who are
' in the List of those who ought publickly
' to be barr'd Communion.

' Unless therefore we have a mind to
' condemn the Church, the Holy Fathers,
' and the most holy Bishops, 'tis impossi-
' ble to justifie *Plays*; neither is the De-
' fence of thse lets impracticable, who
 ' by

‘ by their Countenance of these Diversions, not only have their share of the Mischief there done, but contribute at the same time to fix these unhappy Ministers of Satan in a Profession, which by depriving them of the Sacraments of the Church, leaves them under a constant necessity of Sinning, and out of all hopes of being saved, unless they give it over.

From the general Unlawfulness of *Plays*, the Bishop proceeds to argue more strongly against seeing them at times which are more particularly devoted to Piety, and Humiliation: And therefore he strictly forbids his Diocese the *Play-House* in *Advent*, *Lent*, or under any publick Calamity. And at last concludes in this Manner.

‘ As for the Case of *Players* both Men, and Women, we expressly forbid all our Rectors, Pastors, and Confessours, to admit them to the Sacraments, unless they shall repent them of their Crime, make proof of their Reformation, renounce their *Business*, and retrieve the Scandal they have given, by such publick Satisfaction as we shall think proper to injoin them. Made and Decreed at *Arras* the fourth day of December 1695.

Guy Bishop of *Arras*. &c.

I shall now in the
Third Place, give a short Account of the
Sense of the Primitive Church concerning
the Stage : And first I shall instance in her
Councils.

Ann. 303. The Council of *Illiberis*, or *Collioure* in
Can. 67. *Spain*, decrees,

' That it shall not be lawful for any
' Woman who is either in full Communion
' or a probationer for Baptism, to Marry,
' or Entertain any *Comedians* or *Actors* ;
' whoever takes this Liberty shall be Ex-
' communicated.

Ann. 314. The First Council of *Arles*, runsthus,
Can. 5. ' Concerning *Players*, we have thought
' fit to Excommunicate them as long as
' they continue to *Act*.

Ann. 452. The Second Council of *Arles* made their
20th Canon to the same purpose, and al-
most in the same Words.

Ann. 397. The Third Council of *Carthage*, of which
Can. 11. St. *Augustine* was a Member, ordains,
' That the Sons of Bishops, or other
' Clergy-men should not be permitted to
* *Secularia* furnish out Publick *Shews*, or *Plays* * or
spectacula, which ma- be present at them : Such sort of Pagan
nifestly comprehends. the *Entertainments* being forbidden all the
Stage. *Laity*. It being always unlawful for all
Christians to come amongst *Blasphemers*.

This

This last branch shews the *Gayan* was Principally loyall'd against the *Playe House*: And the reason of the Prohibition, holds every jot as strong against the *English*, as against the *Roman Stage*.

By the 35th Canon of this Council 'tis decreed,

' That *Actors* or others belonging to the ' Stage, who are either *Converts*, or Penitents, upon a Relapse, shall not be denied ' Admission into the Church. This is farther proof, that *Players* as long as they kept to their Employment were barr'd Communion.

Another *African Council* declares,

' That the Testimony of People of ill Reputation, of *Players*, and others of such scandalous Employments, shall not be admitted against any Person.

The Second Council of *Chalton* sets forth.

' That Clergy men ought to abstain from all over-engaging Entertainments in Musick or Show, (*Oculorum auriumque illecebris.*) And as for the Smutty, and Licentious Insolence of *Players*, and Buffoons, let them not only decline the Hearing it themselves, but likewise conclude the *Laity* oblig'd to the same Conduct.

I could cite many more Authorities of this Kind, but being conscious of the Niceness

Ann. 424.
Can. 96.

Council.
Cabillon.
Ann. 813.
Can. 9.

ness of the Age, I shall forbear, and proceed to the Testimony of the Fathers.

abicit nobis id est omni to nolam omni bba.

To begin with *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch*, who lived in the Second Century.

Litr. 3. ad Au:ol. ‘Tis not lawful (says he) for us to be
 ‘present at the Prizes of your *Gladiators*,
 ‘lest by this means we should be *Accessaries* to the Murthers there committed.
 ‘Neither dare we presume upon the Liberty of your other *Shows*, lest our Senses should be tinctur'd, and disoblig'd,
 ‘with Indecency, and Profaneness. The
 ‘Tragical Distractions of *Terens* and *Thyestes*, are Nonsense to us. We are for
 ‘seeing no Representations of Lewdness.
 ‘The Stage-Adulteries of the Gods, and
 ‘*Hero's*, are unwarrantable Entertainments: And so much the worse, because
 ‘the Mercenary *Players* set them off with
 ‘all the Charms and Advantages of Speaking. God forbid that *Christians* who are
 ‘remarkable for Modesty, and Reservedness; who are obliged to Discipline, and
 ‘train'd up in Virtue, God forbid I say,
 ‘that we should dishonour our Thoughts,
 ‘much less our Practice, with such Wick-edness as This!

Tertullian who liv'd at the latter end of this Century is copious upon this Subject; I shall Translate but some Part of

it.

* *Specta-cula.*

it. In his Apologetick, He thus addresses Chap. 38. the Heathens.

' We keep off from your publick Shows,
' because we cannot understand the War-
' rant of their Original. There's Super-
' stition and Idolatry in the Case : And
' we dislike the Entertainment because we
' dislike the reason of it's Institution. Be-
' sides, We have nothing to do with the
' Frenzies of the Race-Ground, the Lewd-
' nesses of the Play-House, or the Barbari-
' ties of the Bear-Garden. The Epicureans
' had the Liberty to state the Notion,
' and determine the Object of Pleasure.
' Why can't we have the same Privilege?
' What Offence is it then if we differ from
' you in the Idea of Satisfaction? If we
' won't understand to brighten our Hu-
' mour, and live pleasantly, where's the
' harm? If any body has the worst on't,
' 'tis only our selves.

His Book *de Spectaculis* was wrote on purpose to dissuade the Christians, from the publick Diversions of the *Heathens*, of which the *Play-House* was one. In his first Chapter He gives them to understand, ' That the Tenour of their Faith, the Reason of Principle, and the Order of Discipline, had barr'd them the Entertainments of the Town. And therefore He exhorts them to refresh their Memories,

memories to run up to their Baptism, and re-collect their first Engagements. For without care, Pleasure is a strange bewitching Thing. When it gets the Ascendent, 'twill keep on Ignorance for an Excuse of Liberty, make a Man's Conscience wink, and suborn his Reason against himself.

Chap. 3

But as he goes on, some Peoples Faith is either too full of Scruples, or too barren of Sense. Nothing will serve to settle them but a plain Text of Scripture: They hover in uncertainty because 'tis not said as expressly thou shall not go to the Play-House, as 'tis thou shalt not Kill. But this looks more like Fencing than Argument. For we have the Meaning of the Prohibition tho not the Sound, in the First Psalm: *Blessed is the Man that walks not in the Council of the Ungodly, nor stands in the way of Sinners, nor sits in the Seats of the Scornful.*

Bid.
Chap. 10.

The Censors whose Business 'twas to take care of Regularity and Manners, look'd on these Play-Houses as no other than Batteries upon Virtue and Sobriety, and for this Reason often pull'd them down before they were well built. So that here we can argue from the Precedents of meer Nature, and plead the Heathens aginst themselves. Upon this view

view Pompey the Great, when he built his Dramatick Bawdy-House, clapp'd a Chappel a Top on't. He would not let it go under the Name of a Play-House, but conven'd the People to a Solemn Dedication, and called it *Venus's Temple*; Giving them to understand at the same time that there were Benches under it for Diversion. He was afraid if he had not gone this way to Work, The Censors might afterwards have razed the Monument, and branded his Memory. Thus a Scandalous Pile of Building was protected: The Temple cover'd the Play-House, and Discipline was baffled by Superstition. But the Design is notably suited to the Patronage of *Bacchus** and *Venus*. These two Confederate Devils of Lust and Intemperance, do well together. The very Functions of the Players resemble their Protectors, and are instances of Service and Acknowledgment. Their Motion is effeminate, and their Gestures vicious and Significant: And thus they worship the Luxury of one Idol, and the Lewdness of the other.

And granting the Regards of Quality, ^{Ibid. cap. 15.} the Advantages of Age, or Temper, may fortifie some People; granting Modesty secur'd, and the Diversion as it were refin'd by this Means; Yet a Man must

The Play-
houses were
dedicated
to Bacchus.

must not expect to stand by perfectly unmoved, and impregnable. Nobody can be pleas'd without Sensible Impressions. Nor can such Perceptions be received without a Train of Passions attending them. These Consequences will be sure to work back upon their Causes, solicite the Fancy, and heighten the Original Pleasure. But if a Man pretends to be a Stoick at Plays, he falls under another Imputation. For where there is no Impression, there can be no Pleasure: And then the Spectator is very much Impertinent, in going where he gets nothing for his Pains. And if this were all; I suppose Christians have something else to do than to ramble about to no purpose.

Ibid. cap. 22.

Even those very Magistrates who abet the Stage, discountenance the Players. They stigmatize their Character, and cramp their Freedoms. The whole Tribe of them is thrown out of all Honour and Privilege. They are neither suffer'd to be Lords, nor Gentlemen: To come within the Senate, or harangue the People, or so much as to be Members of a Common-Council. Now what Caprice and Inconsistency is this! To love what we punish, and lessen those whom we admire! To cry up the Mystery, and condemn it sure

sure the practise; For a Man to be as it were eclips'd upon the score of Merit is certainly an odd sort of Justice! True. But the Inference lies stronger another way. What a Confession then is this of an ill Business; when the very Excellency of it is not without Infamy?

Since therefore Humane Prudence has thought fit to degrade the Stage, notwithstanding the Divertingness of it. Since Pleasure can't make them an Interest Here, nor shelter them from Censure. ^{Ibid. cap. 23.} How will they be able to stand the shock of Divine Justice, and what Reckoning have they Reason to expect Hereafter?

All things consider'd 'tis no wonder such People should fall under Possession. God knows we have had a sad Example of this already. A certain Woman went to the Play-House, and brought the Devil ^{Ibid. cap. 26.} Home with Her. And when the Unclean Spirit was press'd in the Exorcism, and ask'd how he durst attack a Christian. I have done nothing (says he) but what I can justify. For I seiz'd her upon my own Ground. Indeed, how many Instances have we of others who have apostatiz'd from God, by this Correspondence with the Devil? What Communion has Light with Darkness? No Man can serve

*two Masters, nor have Life and Death in
him at the same time.*

*Ibid.
cap.*

27. ‘Will you not then avoid this Seat of
Infection? The very Air suffers by their
Impurities; And they almost pronounce
the Plague. What tho’ the performance
may be in some measure pretty and enter-
taining? What tho’ Innocence, yes and
Virtue too, shines through some part of it?
‘Tis not the custom to prepare Poyson
unpalatable, nor make up Ratxbane with
Rhubarb and Sena. No. To have the
Mischief speed, they must oblige the
Sense, and make the Dose pleasant.
Thus the Devil throws in a Cordial
Drop to make the Draught go down;
And steals some few Ingredients from the
Dispensatory of Heaven. In short, look
upon all the engaging Sentences of the
Stage; Their flights of Fortitude, and
Philosophy, the Loftiness of their Stile,
the Musick of the Cadence, and
the Finesse of the Conduct; Look upon
it only I say as Honey dropping from
the Bowels of a Toad, or the Bag of a
Spider: Let your Health over-rule your
Pleasure, and don’t die of a little *Liquor-
ishness.* *to the end of the page*

‘In earnest Christian, our time for En-
tertainment is not yet: you are too cra-
ving and ill managed if you are so violent
for

for Delight. And let me tell you, no
 wiser than you should be, if you count
 such things Satisfaction. Some Philoso-
 phers placed their Happiness in bare
 Tranquillity. Easiness of Thought, and
 Absence of Pain, was all they aim'd at.
 But this it seems won't Satisfie Thee.
 Thou liest sighing and hankering after
 the Play-House. Prethee recollect thy self:
 Thou knowest Death ought to be our
 Pleasure; And therefore I hope Life may
 be a little without it. Are not our De-
 sires the same with the Apostles, *To be
 Diffolv'd and to be with Christ?* Let us act
 up to our pretensions, and let Pleasure
 betrue to Inclination.

But if you can't wait for Delight; if ^{*ibid. cap.*}
 you must be put into present Possession,
 wee'l cast the Cause upon that Issue.
 Now were you not unreasonable, you
 would perceive the Liberalities of Provi-
 dence, and find your self almost in the
 midst of Satisfaction. For what can be
 more transporting than the Friendship of
 Heaven, and the Discovery of Truth, than
 the Sense of our Mistakes, and the Par-
 don of our Sins? What greater Pleasure
 can there be, than to scorn being *Pleas'd*?
 to contemn the World? And to be a
 Slave to Nothing? 'Tis a mighty satis-
 faction I take it, to have a clear Conscience;

To make Life no Burthen; nor Death
any Terror ! To trample upon the
Pagan Deities ; To batter Principali-
ties and Powers, and force the Devils to
Resign ! * These are the Delights, these
are the noble Entertainments of Christi-
ans : And besides the advantage of the
Quality, they are always at hand, and
cost us nothing.

* By Exor-
cisms.

Lib. 3.

Pedag.

Ann. 204.

cap. 11.

Clemens Alexandrinus affirms ' That the
Circus and *Theatre* may not improperly
be call'd the *Chair of Pestilence*. —
Away then with these Lewd, Ungodly
Diversions, and which are but Imperti-
nence at the Best. What part of Impu-
dence either in words or practice, is omit-
ted by the Stage ? Don't the Buffoons
take almost all manner of Liberties, and
plunge through Thick and Thin, to make
a jest ? Now those who are affected with a
vicious satisfaction, will be haunted with
the Idea, and spread the Infection. But
if a man is not entertain'd to what pur-
pose should he go Thither ? Why should
he be fond where he finds nothing, and
court that which sleeps upon the Sense ?
If 'tis said these Diversions are taken on-
ly to unbend the Mind, and refresh Na-
ture a little. To this I answer, That
the spaces between Business should not
be

be fill'd up with such Rubbish. A wise
man has a Guard upon his Recreations,
and always prefers the Profitable to the
Pleasant.

Minutus Felix delivers his Sense in these
Words. Ann. 206.

As for us, who rate our Degree by
our Virtue, and value our selves more
upon our Lives, than our Fortunes; we
decline your Pompous Shows, and pub-
lick Entertainments. And good Reason
we have for our Aversion. These Things
have their Rise from Idols, and are the
Train of a false Religion. The Plea-
sure is ill Descended, and likewise Viti-
ous and ensnaring. For who can do less
than abominare, the Clamorous Disor-
ders of the Race-Ground, and the pro-
fession of Murther at the Prize? And
for the Stage, there you have more
Lewdness, tho' not a jot less of Distrac-
tion. Sometimes your Minuts, are so
Scandalous and Excessive, that 'tis almost
hard to distinguish between the Act and
the Representation. Sometimes a Lucifer-
ous Actor shall whine you into Love,
and give the Disease that he Counterfeits.

St. Cyprian or the Author *de Spectaculis*,
will furnish us farther.

Here this Father argues against those
who thought the Play-House no unlawful

Diversion, because 'twas not Condemn'd
 by express Scripture. 'Let meer Modesty
 (says he) supply the *Holy Text*: And
 'let Nature govern where *Revelation*
 'does not reach. Some Things are too
 'black to lie upon Paper, and are more
 'strongly forbidden, because unmention'd.
 'The Divine Wisdom must have had a
 'low Opinion of *Christians*, had it descen-
 'ded to particulars in this Case. Silence
 'is sometimes the best Method for Autho-
 'rity. To forbid often puts People in
 'mind of what they should not do; And
 'thus the force of the Precept is lost by
 'naming the Crime. Besides, what need
 'we any farther Instruction? Discipline
 'and general Restraint makes up the
 'Meaning of the Law; and Common Rea-
 'son will tell you what the Scripture has
 'left unsaid. I would have every one
 'examine his own Thoughts, and inquire
 'at Home into the Duties of his Profes-
 'sion. This is a good way to secure
 'him from Indecency. For those Rules
 'which a Man has work'd out for him-
 'self, he commonly makes most use of.---
 And after having describ'd the infamous
 Diversions of the *Play-House*; He expostu-
 lates in this Manner.
 'What business has a Christian at such
 Places as these? A Christian who has not
 'the

'the Liberty so much as to think of an
'ill Thing. Why does he entertain him-
'self with Lewd Representations? Has
'he a mind to discharge his Modesty,
'and be flesh'd for the *Practice*? Yes; this
'is the Consequence. By using to see these
'Things, he'll learn to do them.——
'What need I mention the Levities, and
'Impertinence in *Comedies*, or the ranting
'Distractions of *Tragedy*? Were there
'Things unconcern'd with Idolatry, Chri-
'stians ought not to be at them. For
'were they not highly Criminal, the Fool-
'ery of them is egregious, and unbecom-
'ing the Gravity of Believers.

'As I have often said these Foppish,
'these pernicious Diversions, must be a-
'voided. We must set a Guard upon
'our Senses, and keep the Sentinel always
'upon Duty. To make Vice familiar to
'the ear, is the way to recommend it.
'And since the mind of Man has a Natu-
'ral Bent to Extravagance; how is it
'likely to hold out under Example, and
'Invitation? If you push that which re-
'sters already, whither will it tumble?
'In earnest, we must draw off our Incli-
'nations from these Vanities. A Christian
'has much better *Sights* than these to
'look at. He has solid Satisfactions in his
S 4 Power,

The Opinion of the Church

' Power, which will please and improve
' him at the same time.

' Would a Christian be agreeably Re-
' fresh'd? Let him read the *Scriptures*;
' Here the Entertainment will suit his
' Character, and be big enough for his Qua-
' lity.---Beloved, how noble, how moving,
' how profitable a pleasure is it to be thus
' employed? To have our Expectations al-
' ways in prospect, and be intent on the
' Glories of Heaven?

He has a great deal more upon this Sub-
ject in his *Epistles to Donatus and Emer-
tius*, which are undoubtedly genuine. The
later being somewhat remarkable, I shall
Translate part of it for the Reader.

*Ad Eu-
cras.*

' Dear Brother, your usual Kindness,
' together with your desire of relieving
' your own Modesty and mine, has put
' you upon asking my Thoughts concer-
ning a certain *Player* in your Neighbour-
hood, whether such a Person ought to
be allow'd the Privilege of *Communion*:
This Man it seems continues in his Stan-
dalous Profession, and keeps a Nursery
under him. He teaches that which twas
a Crime in him to learn, sets up for a
Master of Debauch, and Propagates the
lewd Mystery. The *Cafe* standing thus,
'tis my Opinion that the Admission of
such a Member would be a Breach of the
' Discipline

' Discipline of the Gospel, and a Prelumption upon the Divine Majesty : Neither do I think it fit the Honour of the Church should suffer by so Infamous a Correspondence.'

Lactantius's Testimony shall come next.

This Author in his *Divine Institutions*, ^{Lib. 6.} which he Dedicates to *Constantine the Great*, cautions the Christians against the Play-House, from the Disorders, and danger of those places. For as he observes.

The debauching of Virgins, and the Amours of Strumpets, are the Subject of Comedy. And here the Rule is, the more Rhetorick the more Mischief, and the best Poets are the worst Common-Wealths-men. For the Harmony and Ornament of the Composition serves only to recommend the Argument, to fortify the Charm, and engage the Memory. At last he concludes with this advice.

Let us avoid therefore these Diversions, lest somewhat of the Malignity should seize us. Our Minds should be quiet and Compos'd, and not over-run with Amusements. Besides, a Habit of Pleasure is an ensnaring Circumstance. Tis ^{Ibid. capa} apt to make us forget God, and grow cool in the Offices of Virtue.

'Should

' Should a Man have a Stage at Home,
 ' would not his Reputation suffer extrem-
 ' ly, and all people count him a notorious
 ' Libertine ? most undoubtedly. Now the
 ' Place does not alter the Property. The
 ' Practice at the *Play-House* is the same
 ' thing, only there he has more Company
 ' to keep him in Countenance.

' A well work'd Poem is a powerful
 ' piece of Imposture : It masters the Fan-
 ' cy, and hurries it no body knows whi-
 ' ther. — If therefore we would be go-
 ' vern'd by Reason let us stand off from
 ' the Temptation, such Pleasures can have
 ' no good Meaning. Like delicious Mor-
 ' sels they subdue the Palate, and flatter
 ' us only to cut our Throats. Let us pre-
 ' fer Reality to Appearance, Service, to
 ' Show ; and Eternity to Time.

Ibid. cap. 22.

' As God makes Virtue the Condition
 ' of Glory, and trains men up to Hap-
 ' piness by Hardship and Industry.
 ' So the Devil's Road to Destruction lies
 ' through Sensuality and *Epicurism*. And
 ' as pretended Evils lead us on to un-
 ' counterfeited Bliss, so Visionary Satis-
 ' factions are the causes of Real Misery.
 ' In short, These Inviting Things are all
 ' stratagem. Let us take care the soft-
 ' ness and Importance of the Pleasure
 ' does not surprise us, nor the Bait bring
 ' us

us within the snare. The Senses are more than Our Works, and should be defended accordingly.

I shall pass over St. Ambrose, and go *In Psl.* on to St. Chrysostom. This Father is copious upon the Subject, I could translate some Sheets from him were it necessary. But length being not my Busines, a few Lines may serve to discover his Opinion. His *Homilia ad Populam Antiochenum*, runs thus. *or Non vobis debet subdolus*
Most People fancy the Unlawfulness of going to Plays is not clear. But by their favour, a world of Disorders are the Consequences of such a Liberty. For frequenting the Play-House has brought Whoring and Ribaldry into Vogue, and finish'd all the parts of Debauchery.

Afterwards he seems to make the supposition better than the Fact, and argues upon a feign'd Case.

Let us not only avoid downright Sinning, but the Tendencies to it. Some Indifferent Things are fatal in the Consequence, and strike us at the Rebound. Now who would chuse his standing with in an Inch of a Fall; or swim upon the Verge of a Whirlpool? He that walks upon a Precipice, shakes tho' he does not tumble. And commonly his Concern brings him to the Bottom. The Case is much the

'the same in reference to Conscience, and
'Morality. He that won't keep his Di-
'stance from the Gulph, is oftentimes
'fuck'd in by the Eddy; and the least
'oversight is enough to undo Him.

In his 37 Homily upon the Eleventh Chapter of St. Matthew, he declaims more at large against the Stage.

'Smutty Songs (says he) are much
'more abominable than Stench and Or-
'dure. And which is most to be lament-
'ed, you are not at all uneasy at such
'Licentiousness. You Laugh when you
'should Frown; and Commend what
'you ought to abhor. -- Heark you, you
'can keep the Langtage of your own
'House in order: If your Servants or
'your Childrens Tongues run Riot, they
'presently smart for't. And yet at the
'Play-House you are quite another Thing.
'These little Buffoons have a strange Af-
'fidence! A lascious Sentence is huge-
'ly welcome from their Mouth: And in-
'stead of Censure, they have thanks and
'encouragement for their Pains. Now
'if a Man would be so just as to won-
'der at himself, here's Madness, and Con-
'tradiction in Abundance.

'But I know you'll say what's this to
'me, I neither sing nor pronounce, any of
'this Lewd stuff? Granting your Plea,
'what

' what do you get by't ? If you don't repeat these Scurrilities, you are very willing to hear them. Now whether the Ear, or the Tongue is mismanaged, comes much to the same reckoning. The difference of the *Organ*, does not alter the Action so mightily, as you may imagine. But pray how do you prove you don't repeat them ? They may be your Discourse, or the Entertainments of your Closet for ought we know to the contrary. This is certain ; you hear them with Pleasure in your Face, and make it your Business to run after them : And to my Mind, these are strong Arguments of your Approbation,

' I desire to ask you a Question. Suppose you hear any Wretches Blaspheme, are you in any Rapture about it ? And do your Gestures appear Airy, and obliged ? Far from it. I doubt not but your Blood grows Chill, and your Ears are stopt at the Presumption. And what's the Reason of this Aversion in your Behaviour ? Why 'tis because you don't use to Blaspheme, your self. Pray clear your self the same way from the Charge of Obscenity. We'll then believe you don't talk Smut, when we perceive you careful not to hear it. Lewd Sonnets, and Serenades are quite different from the Prescriptions
of

‘of Virtue. This is strange Nourishment
‘for a Christian to take in! I don’t wan-
‘der you should lose your Health, when
‘you feed thus Foul. It may be Chaffing
‘is no such easy Task! Innocence moves
‘upon an Ascent, at least for some time.
‘Now those who are always Laughing
‘can never strain up Hill. If the best pre-
‘parations of Care will just do, what must
‘become of those that are dissolv’d in Plea-
‘sure, and lie under the Instructions of De-
‘bauchery? ----- Have you not heard how
‘that St. Paul exhorts us *to rejoice in the*
Lord? He said *in the Lord*; not in the Devil.
‘But alas! what Leisure have you to mind
‘St. Paul? How should you be sensible of
‘your Faults, when your Head is always
‘kept Hot, and as it were intoxicated with
‘Buffooning? ----- He goes on, and
lashes the Impudence of the Stage with a
great deal of Satyr and Severity; and at
last proposes this Objection.

‘You’ll say, I can give you many In-
stances where the *Play-House* has done no
Harm. Don’t mistake. Throwing away
‘of Time and ill Example, has a great deal
‘of Harm in’t; and thus far you are guil-
ty at the best. For granting your own
Virtue impenetrable, and out of Reach,
Granting the Protection of your Temper
has brought you off unhurt, are all People
thus

thus Fortified? By no means. However,
many a weak Brother has ventur'd after
you, and miscarried upon your Precedent.
And since you make others thus Faulty,
how can you be *Innocent* your self? All
the People undone There, will lay their
Ruin at your Door. The Company are
all Accessary to the Mischief of the Place.
For were there no *Audience*, we should
have no *Acting*. And therefore those
who joyn in the Crime, will ne'er be part-
ed in the Punishment. Granting your
Modesty has secur'd you, which by the
way I believe nothing of; yet since many
have been debauch'd by the *Play-House*,
you must expect a severe Reckoning for
giving them Encouragement. Tho' after
all, as Virtuous as you are, I doubt not,
you wou'd have been much Better, had
you kept away.

In fine, Let us not dispute to no pur-
pose; The Practice won't bear a Defence!
Where the Cause is naught 'tis in vain to
rack our Reason, and strain for Pretences.
The best excuse for what is past, is to
stand clear from the Danger, and do so no
more.

One citation more from St. Chrysostom,
and I take leave. In the Preface of his Com-
mentary upon St. John's Gospel speaking of
Plays and other Publick Shews, he has these
words. But

The Opinion of the Church

' But what need I branch out the Lewdnesses of those Spectacles, and be particular in Description? For what's there to be met with but Lewd Laughing, but Smur, Railing, and Buffoonry? In a word. ' 'Tis all Scandal and Confusion. Observe me, I speak to you all; Let none who partake of this *Holy-Table*, unqualifie themselves with such Mortal Diversions.

St. Hierom on the 1st. Verse, 32 Psal makes this Exposition upon the Text,

' Some are delighted with the Satisfactions of the World, some with the *Circus*, and some with the *Theatre*: But the Psalmist commands every good Man to *des-light himself in the Lord*.----For as *Isaiah* speaks, *Wo to them that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*. And in his Epistles he cautions the Ladies against having any thing to do with the *Play-House*, against Lewd Songs, and Ill Conversation. Because they set ill Humours at work, Care's the Fancy, and make Pleasure a Conveyance for Destruction.

*Ep. 9. 12.
Advers.
Jovinian.
Lib. 2.
cap. 7.*

Chap. 20.

In the 6th. Book of his Commentary on *Ezekiel* he lets us understand; 'That when we depart out of *Egypt* we must refine our Inclinations, and change our Delights into Aversion. And after some other Instances, He tells us we must decline

decline the Theatres, and all other dangerous Diversions, which stain the Innocence of the Soul, and slip into the Will through the Senses.

St. Augustine in his 5th Epistle to *Marcilius* will afford us something upon the same Argument.

The prosperity of Sinners is their greatest Unhappiness. If one may say so, They are most Punish'd when they are overlook'd. By this means their bad Temper is encourag'd; and they are more inclin'd to be false to themselves; And we know an Enemy *within*, is more dangerous than one *without*. But the perverse Reasonings of the Generality, make different Conclusions. They fancy the World goes wonderfully well when People make a Figure. When a Man is a Prince in his Fortune, but a Begger in his Virtue; Has a great many fine Things about him, but not so much as one good Quality to deservethem. When the Play-Houses go up, and Religion go's down. When Prodigality is admir'd, and Charity laugh'd at. When the Players can revel with the Rich Man's purse, and the Poor have scarce enough to keep Life and Soul together.—When God suffers these Things to flourish, we may be sure he is most Angry. Present Im-

The Opinion of the Church

'punit, is the deepest Revenge. But,
'when he cuts off the Supplies of Luxury,
'and disables the Powers of Extravagance,
'then as one may say, he is mercifully severe.

cap. 33. In his 1st. Book *de consensu Evangelistarum*, He answers an Objection of the Heathens, and comes up to the Case in Hand.

'Their Complaint as if the Times
'were less happy since the Appearance of
'Christianity is very unreasonable. Let them
'read their own Philosophers: There they'll
'find those very Things censured, which
'they now are so uneasy to part with:
'This Remark must shut up their Mouths,
'and convince them of the Excellency of
'our Religion. For pray what Satisfac-
'tions have they lost? None that I know
'of, excepting some Licentious ones,
'which they abused to the Dishonour of
'their Creatour. But it may be the Times
'are bad because the *Theaters* are Tum-
'bling almost every where. The *Thea-*
'ters those Cages of Uncleanliness, and pub-
'lick Schools of Debauchery.—And
'what's the Reason of their running to
'Ruine? Why 'tis the Reformation of
'the Age: 'Tis because those Lewd Pra-
'ctices are out of Fashion, which first built
'and kept them in Countenance. Their
'own *Tully's* Commendation of the *Autor*
'*Roscinius* is remarkable. He was so much

' a Master (says he) that none but himself was worthy to Tread the Stage. And on the other hand, so good a Man, that he was the most unfit Person of the Gang to come There. And is not this a plain Confession of the Lewdness of the Play-House; And that the better a Man was, the more he was obliged to forbear it?

I could go on much farther with St. Augustine, but I leave to bear as brief as may be. I could likewise run through the succeeding Centuries, and collect Evidence all along. But I conceive the best Ages, and the biggest Authorities, may be sufficient: And these the Reader has had already. However, one Instance more from the Moderns may not be amiss. *Didacus de Tapia* an eminent Spaniard, shall close the Evidence. This Author in debating the Question whether Players might be admitted to the Sacrament, amongst other things encounters an Objection. Some People it seems pretended there was some good to be learn'd at the Play-House. To these, he maketh this reply.

' Granting your Supposition, (says he) your Inference is naught. Do People use to send their Daughters to the Streets for Discipline? And yet it may be, they might meet some there lamenting their own Debauchery. No Man will breed his Son upon the High-way, to harden his

The CONCLUSION.

*Didac. &c.
in D.Thom.
p. 546.*

' Courage; Neither will any one go on
' board a Leaky Vessel, to learn the Art of
' shifting in a Wreck the better. My con-
' clusion is, let no body go to the Infamous
' Play-House. A place of such staring Con-
' tradiction to the Strictness and Sobriety of
' Religion: A Place hated by God, and haunt-
' ed by the Devil. Let no man I say learn to
' relish any thing that's said there; For 'tis
' all but Poyson handsomly prepared.

Thus I have presented the Reader with
a short View of the Sense of Christianity.
This was the opinion of the Church for
the first 500 Years. And thus she has
Censured the Stage both in Councils,
and Single Authorities. And since the Sa-
tyr of the Fathers comes full upon the
Modern Poets, their Caution must be ap-
plicable. The parity of the Case makes
their Reasons take place, and their Auth-
ority revive upon us. If we are Christians,
the Canons of Councils, and the Sense of the
Primitive Church must have a weight. The
very Time is a good argument of it self.
Then the Apostolical Traditions were fresh,
and undisputed; and the Church much bet-
ter agreed than she has been since. Then,
Discipline was in Force, and Virtue Flou-
rishi'd, and People liv'd up to their Profes-
sion. And as for the Persons, they are be-
yond all exception. Their Station, their
Learning,

Learning, and Sufficiency was very Considerable ; Their Piety and Resolution, extraordinary. They acted generously, and wrote freely, and were always above the little Regards of Interest or Danger. To be short ; They were, as we may say the *Worthies of Christendom*, the Flower of Humane Nature, and the Top of their Species. Nothing can be better establish'd than the Credit of these *Fathers* : Their Affirmation goes a great way in a proof ; And we might argue upon the strength of their *Character*.

But supposing them contented to wave their Privilege, and dispute upon the Level. Granting this, the *Sage* would be undone by them. The Force of their Reasoning, and the bare *Intrinsic* of the Argument, would be abundantly sufficient to carry the Cause.

But it may be objected, is the Resemblance exact between Old *Rome* and *London*, will the Parallel hold out, and has the *English Stage* any Thing so bad as the *Dancing* of the *Pantomimi* ? I don't say that : The *Modern Gestures* tho' bold, and Lewd too sometimes, are not altogether so scandalous as the *Roman*. Here then we can make them some little Abatement.

And to go as far in their *Excuse* as we can, 'tis probable their *Musick* may not be altogether so exceptionable as that of the

The CONCLUSION.

Antients. I don't say this part of the Entertainment is directly vicious, because I am not willing to Censure at Uncertainties. Those who frequent the Play-House are the most competent Judges: But this I must say, the Performances of this kind are much too fine for the Place. 'Twere to be wish'd that either the Plays were better, or the Musick worse. I'm sorry to see Art so meanly Prostituted: Atheism ought to have nothing Charming in its Retinue. 'Tis great Pity Debauchery should have the Assistance of a fine Hand, to whet the Appetite, and play it down.

Now granting the Play-House-Musick not vicious in the Composition, yet the design of it is to refresh the Idea's of the Action, to keep Time with the Poem, and be true to the Subject. For this Reason among others the Tunes are generally Airy and Gailliar-dizing: They are contriv'd on purpose to excite a sportive Humour, and spread a Gaiety upon the Spirits. To banish all Gravity and Scruple, and lay Thinking and Reflection asleep. This sort of Musick warms the Passions, and unlocks the Fancy, and makes it open to Pleasure like a Flower to the Sun. It helps a Luscious Sentence to slide, drowns the Discords of Atheism, and keeps off the Aversions of Conscience. It throws a Man off his Guard, makes way for an ill Impression,

d82
279

The CONCLUSION.

tion, and is most Commodiously planted to do Mischief. A Lewd Play with good Musick is like a Loadstone Arm'd, it draws much stronger than before.

Now why should it be in the power of a few mercenary Hands to Play People out of their Senses, to run away with their Understandings, and wind their Passions about their Fingers as they list ? Musick is almost as dangerous as Gunpowder ; And it may be requires looking after no less than the *Press*, or the *Mint*. Tis possible a Publick Regulation might not be amiss. No less a Philosopher than *Plato* seems to be of this Opinion. He is clearly for keeping up the old, grave, and solemn way of *Playing*. He lays a mighty stress upon this Observation : He does not stick to affirm, that to extend the *Science*, and alter the *Notes*, is the way to have the *Laws* repeal'd and to unsettle the *Constitution*. I suppose He imagined that if the Power of *Sounds*, the Temper of *Constitutions*, and the Diversities of Age, were well studied ; If this were done, and some general Permissions formed upon the Enquiry, the *Commonwealth* might find their Account in't.

Tully does not carry the Speculation thus high : However, he owns it has a weight in't, and should not be overlook'd, He denies not but that when the Musick is soft,

The CONCLUSION.

exquisite, and airy, 'tis dangerous and en-
shaming. He commends the Discipline of
the antient Greeks, for fencing against this
Inconveniencie. He tells us the *Lacedemo-*
nians fixt the number of Strings for the
Harp, by express *Law*. And afterwards si-
lenc'd *Timotheus*, * and seiz'd his Harp, for
having One String above publick Allow-
ance. To return. If the *English-Stage* is more
reserv'd than the *Roman* in the Case above
mention'd: If they have any advantage in
their *Instrumental Musick*, they lose it in
their *Vocal*. Their *Songs* are often ran-
pantly Lewd, and Irreligious to a flaming
Excel. Here you have the very *Spirit* and
Essence of Vice drawn off strong scented,
and thrown into a little Compas. Now
the *Antients*, as we have seen already, were
inoffensive in this respect.

To go on. As to Rankness of Lan-
guage we have seen how deeply the *Mo-*
derns stand charged upon the Comparison.
And as for their Caressing of Libertines,
their ridiculing of Virtue, their horrible
Profaneness, and Blasphemies, there's no-
thing in *Antiquity* can reach them.

Now were the *Stage* in a Condition
to wipe off any of these Imputations, which
They are not, there are two Things be-
hind, which would stick upon them, and
have an ill Effect upon the *Audience*.

The

* A FAMOUS
Musition.

Ibid.

See Chap.
iij.

The first is their dilating so much upon the Argument of Love.

This Subject is generally treated Home, and in the most tender and passionate manner imaginable. 'Tis often the governing Concern: The Incidents make way, and the Plot turns upon't. As matters go, the Company expect it; And it may be the Poets can neither Write, nor Live without it. This is a cunning way enough of stealing upon the Blind Side, and Practising upon the Weakness of humane Nature. People love to see their Passions painted no less than their Persons: And like *Narcissus* are apt to dote on their own Image. This Bent of self-Admiration recommends the Business of *Amours*, and engages the Inclination. And which is more, these Love-representations oftentimes call up the Spirits, and set them on work. The *Play* is acted over again in the *Scene* of Fancy, and the first Imitation becomes a Model. *Love* has generally a *Party Within*; And when the Wax is prepared, the Impression is easily made. Thus the Disease of the Stage grows Catching: It throws its own *Amours* among the Company, and forms these Passions when it does not find them. And when they are born before, they thrive extreamly in this *Nursery*. Here they seldom fail either of Growth, or Complexion. They grow strong, and they

The CONCLUSION.

they grow Charming too. This is the best Place to recover a Languishing Amour, to rouse it from sleep, and retrieve it from Indifference. And thus Desire becomes Absolute, and forces the Oppositions of Decency and Shame. And if the Misfortune does not go thus far, the consequences are none of the best. The Passions are up in Arms, and there's a mighty Contest between Duty, and Inclination. The Mind is over-run with Amusements, and commonly good for nothing some time after.

I don't say the Stage Fells all before them, and disables the whole Audience : 'Tis a hard Battle where none escapes. However, Their Triumphs and their Trophies are unspeakable. Neither need we much wonder at the Matter. They are dangerously Prepar'd for Conquest, and Empire. There's Nature, and Passion, and Life, in all the Circumstances of their Action. Their Declamation, their Mien, their Gestures, and their Equipage, are very moving and significant. Now when the Subject is agreeable, a lively Representation, and a Passionate way of Expression, make wild work, and have a strange force upon the Blood, and Temper.

And then as for the General Strains of Courtship, there can be nothing more Profane and extravagant. The Heroe's Mistress is

is no less than his Deity. She disposes of his Reason, prescribes his Motions, and Commands his Interest. What Sovereign Respect, what Religious Address, what Idolizing Raptures are we pester'd with! *Shrines* and *Offerings*, and Adorations, are nothing upon such solemn Occasions. Thus Love and Devotion, Ceremony and Worship, are Confounded; And God, and his Creatures treated both alike! These Shreds of Distraction are often brought from the Play-House into Conversation: And thus the Sparks are taught to Court their Mistresses, in the same Language they say their Prayers.

A Second Thing which I have to object against the Stage is their encouraging Revenge. What is more Common than Duels and Quarrelling in their Characters of Figure? Those Practices which are infamous in Reason, Capital in Law, and Damnable in Religion, are the Credit of the Stage. Thus Rage and Resentment, Blood and Barbarity, are almost Deified: Pride goes for Greatness, and *Fiends* and *Herds* are made of the same Metal. To give Instances were needless, nothing is more frequent. And in this respect the French Dramatists have been to blame no less than the English. And thus the Notion of Honour is mis-stated, the Maxims of Christianity despised, and the Peace of the World disturb'd. I grant this
desperate

*Vid. Carneille Cid.
Cinna &
Pompey.*

Moral
Essay.

desperate Custom is no Original of the Stage. But then why was not the Growth of it check'd ? I thought the Poets busi-
ness had not been to back false Reasoning and ill Practice ; and to fix us in Frensy and Mistake. Yes, They have done their endeavour to cherish the Malignity, and keep the Disorder in Countenance. They have made it both the Mark, and the Merit of a Man of Honour ; and set it off with *Quality*, and *Commendation*. But I have discours'd on this Subject elsewhere, and therefore shall pursue it no further.

To draw towards an End. And here I must observe that these two later Exceptions are but Petty Mismanagements with respect to the Former. And when the best are thus bad, what are the worst ? What must we say of the more foul Representations, of all the Impudence in Language and Gesture ? Can this stuff be the Inclination of *Ladies* ? Is a *Reading* upon Vice so Entertaining, and do they love to see the *Stews Dissected* before them ? One would think the Dishonour of their own Sex, the Discovery of so much Lewdness, and the treating Human Nature so very Coarsly, could have Little Satisfaction in't. Let us set Conscience aside, and throw the other World out of the Question : These Interests are far the greatest, but not all. The *Ladies*

Ladies have other Motives to confine them. The Restraints of Decency, and the Considerations of Honour, are sufficient to keep them at Home. But hoping They will be just to themselves I shall waive this unacceptable Argument. I shall only add, that a Surprise ought not to be Censured. Accidents are no Faults. The strictest Virtue may sometimes stumble upon an *Ill-Sight*. But Choice, and Frequency, and ill Ground, conclude strongly for Inclination. To be assured of the inoffensiveness of the *Play* is no more than a Necessary Precaution. Indeed the *Players* should be generally discouraged. They have no relish of Modesty, nor any Scruples upon the Quality of the Treat. The grossest *Disb* when 'twill down is as ready as the Best. To say Money is their Business and they must *Live*, is the Plea of *Pick-pockets*, and *High-way-Men*. These later may as well pretend their *Vocation* for a Lewd practice as the other. But
To give the Charge it's due Compals:
To comprehend the whole *Audience*, and
take in the Motives of Religion.

And here I can't imagine how we can reconcile such Liberties without our Profession. These Entertainments are as it were Literally renounc'd in *Baptism*. They are the *Vanities of the wicked World*, and the *Works of the Devil*, in the most open, and
em-

or. 6.14. emphatical Signification. *What Communion has Light with Darkness, and what concord has Christ with Belial.* Call you this Diversion? Can Profaneness be such an irresistible Delight? Does the Crime of the Performance make the Spirit of the Satisfaction; and is the Scorn of Christianity the Entertainment of Christians? Is it such a Pleasure to hear the *Scriptures* burlesqu'd? Is Ribaldry so very obliging, and *Atheism* so Charming a Quality? Are we indeed willing to quit the Priviledge of our Nature; to surrender our *Character* of Immortality, and throw up the Pretences to another Life? It may be so! but then we should do well to remember that *Nothing* is not in our Power. Our Desires did not make us, neither can they unmake us. But I hope our Wishes are not so mean, and that we have a better Sense of the Dignity of our *Being*. And if so, how can we be pleas'd with those Things which would degrade us into Brutes, which ridicule our *Creed*, and turn all our Expectations into *Romance*?

And after all, the best on't is, these Men would make us believe their Design is Virtue and Reformation. In good time! They are likely to combat Vice with success, who destroy the Principles of Good and Evil! Take them at the best, and they do no more than expose a little Humour, and Formality. But

But then, as the Matter is manag'd, the Correction is much worse than the Fault. They laugh at *Pedantry*, and teach *Ahism*, cure a Pimple, and give the Plague. I heartily wish they would have let us alone. To exchange Virtue for Behaviour is a hard Bargain. Is not plain Honesty much better than Hypocrisy well dress'd? What's Sight good for without Substance? What is a well-Bred Libertine but a well-Bred Knave? One that can't prefer Conscience to Pleasure, without calling himself Fool: And will sell his Friend, or his Father, if need be, for his Convenience.

In short: Nothing can be more disserviceable to Proibitry and Religion, than the management of the Stage. It cherishes those Passions, and rewards those Vices, which 'tis the Busines of Reason to discountenance. It strikes at the Root of Principle, draws off the Inclinations from Virtue, and spoils good Education: 'Tis the most effectual means to baffle the Force of Discipline, to emasculate peoples Spirits and Debauch their Manners. How *many* of the Unwary have these *Sirens* devour'd? And how often has the best Blood been tainted, with this Infection? What Disappointment of Parents, what Confusion in Families, and what Beggary in Estates have been hence occasion'd? And which is still worse,

the

The Conclusion.

the Mischief spreads daily, and the Malig-
nity grows more envenom'd. The Fever
works up towards Madness, and will
scarcely endure to be touch'd. And
what hope is there of Health when the Pa-
tient strikes in with the Disease, and dies
in the Face of the Remedy? Can Religion
retrieve us? Yes, when we don't despise it.
But while our *Notions* are怠慢, our
Lives will hardly be otherwise. What can
the Assistance of the Church signify to those
who are more ready to Rally the Preachers,
than Practise the Sermon? To those who
are overgrown with Pleasure, and hardened
in Ill Custom? Who have neither Patience
to hear, nor Conscience to take hold of?
You may almost as well feed a Man with-
out a Mouth, as give Advice where there's
no disposition to receive it. 'Tis true; as
long as there is Life there's Hope. Some-
times the Force of Argument, and the
Grace of God, and the Anguish of Affi-
ction, may strike through the Prejudice,
and make their Way into the Soul. But
these Circumstances don't always meet,
and then the Case is extremely dangerous.
For this miserable Temper, we may thank
the Stage in a great Measure. And there-
fore, if I mistake not, They have the least
pretence to Favour, and the most need of
Repentance, of all Men Living.

T H E E N D.

